

March 7, 2009

**TCC AFTER ACTION REPORT
On “ADVOCACY ON THE HILL”
Conducted on 5 February 2009**

This report summarizes many of the points raised by individual chapters in their reports and also includes comments of the undersigned.

Most of the participating chapters felt the effort was on-the-whole well organized by TCC, useful in supporting worthy legislation, and enjoyable. One of the chapters pointed out that with frequent call up of reserve component personnel from their districts Legislators had a heightened awareness of veterans' issues. There was general agreement that meeting with Legislators or their staffers should be limited to 10 to 15 minutes and discussions limited to about four major points, with leave-behinds to amplify such points and address any other essential points, as we actually did. It is the belief of the undersigned that we accomplished our goal of establishing with the Legislature that MOAA is a responsible, credible organization that knows its subject and does not waist the time of Legislators. How successful we will be in achieving passage of our legislative goals remains to be seen. It is clear that we still have much to learn, but it is also clear that “grass roots” support, such as TCC can muster, is a substantial aid to passage of legislation.

The chapters had a number of suggestions for improving the effort, most of which are things that TCC needs to do. The question was raised as to whether we were at the Legislature at the optimum time. It was suggested that TCC start the cycle much earlier by laying more groundwork with the National Guard, the Texas Military Coalition, and key legislative committees (and relevant subcommittees)—in the Senate: Veterans Affairs and Installations, Finance, and State Affairs; and in the House: Appropriations and State Affairs. It was also suggested that TCC develop follow-on actions and arrange for emails from chapters to Legislators at critical points in the legislative process. The undersigned believes that committee members and their staffers can give TCC helpful guidance on all of these matters.

With respect to assisting chapters in preparing for their meetings with Legislators, it was suggested that it would be helpful to have accurate figures on the number of active duty personnel and veterans in the respective districts, or al least counties, as well as the estimated cost of each proposed legislative initiative. The undersigned will undertake to locate statistics and it is hoped that key committees can give us cost estimates.

It was also requested that complete and final briefing and leave-behind materials be in the hands of chapters early so that they have plenty of time to prepare for meetings and may include summary information in emails requesting appointments. There was some last minute confusion as advocating points were changed the night before the February 5th meetings. We all know that there were good reasons why this year there had to be last minute changes, but it is believed that the request for TCC to firm things up early in the future is a valid one.

In summary it is believed the chapters have done an excellent job in supporting “Advocacy on the Hill” and have made very constructive suggestions for improving the

effectiveness in TCC efforts in the future. Many of the matters discussed above are tasks for the undersigned. The participation we get from chapters in the future will depend significantly upon their perceiving that their participation is part of a well-planned, effective TCC effort. Chapter reports follow.

Dave Briggs
VP-Legislative, TCC

Louraine Robertson and I visited the offices of 5 Representatives and 1 Senator. The Representatives were: Harvey Hilderbran, District 53; Sid Miller, District 59; Patrick Rose, District 45; Jimmie Don Aycock, District 54; and Doug Miller, District 73. We were able to talk personally with Representative Sid Miller and Jimmie Don Aycock. We talked to the staff members of the other Representatives and Senator Troy Fraser, Senate District 24.

All of the staff members we talked to, with the exception of Representative Doug Miller, were very knowledgeable and very pleasant. They were, for the most part, aware of the bills which we were interested in and were able to talk with some degree of concern about these subjects. Representative Doug Millers office was very busy and had some folks out with health problems, so we talked with his Scheduler, and she ensured us she would pass on the talking papers we provided and would discuss the subjects with his Legislative Aide.

I was thoroughly impressed with the folks we talked to and was shocked at the young ages of these folks. Guess I'm getting old.

The day, I thought, was huge success and an outstanding learning experience for me. I look forward to the next one.

Dale Fixsen
LtCol USAF Retired
Chapter President
Highland Lakes Chapter, MOAA

EL PASO CHAPTER
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February 7, 2009, Saturday

Subject: Report - El Paso Chapter, Texas Council of Chapters (TCC) Advocating on the Hill, 81st Texas Legislative Session, February 4 – 6, 2009

Organization of paper: Preparation at Chapter level prior to TCC Advocating on the Hill; Chronology of event; Thoughts; and Recommendations for future.

Preparation prior to Advocating on the Hill:

- Contacted Senate and Representatives's offices prior to event to schedule office calls using State site and email system about a week prior needs to be accomplished earlier...site: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/county.aspx> type County in, select Senator and Representatives, use email system asking for an appointment...suggest one start with their Senator and Representative, check your voters registration card for Representative's district telling him you are a constituent...inform the other representatives that you are representing members of your organization that are his constituents...include one liner personnel issues formulated by TCC in your email as talking points.
- Develop a one page overview of the national, state, and local organization with member numbers and association alliances...include a single page talking paper for each legislative issue you are concerned with for the current legislative session...construct a tabbed folder with the name of the legislator and your organization and name and contact address and phone number...print the tabs much like a calling card on 2x4 Avery 5163 labels, which look much like calling cards and fix them to the folder on the front. Put overview, issue talking point papers, and newsletters or whatever else into the folders to leave with the legislator contact...don't spend more than ten minutes. Expect that you will not see everyone but concentrate on legislator's Chiefs of Staff or Legislative Liaison members who formulate policy.

Chronology of event

3 February:

Travel to Austin from El Paso by road; Dinner with Colonel Lee Lange, Director, Council and Chapters, MOAA, and CAPT Bob and Hallie Rymal, Immediate Past President, TCC.

4 February:

Office Call at Camp Mabry to meet and discuss matters of cooperating on developing a working relationship going forward between TCC and the Office of the Adjutant General of Texas. LTG Charles G. Rodriguez, Adjutant General Texas, arranged for TCC to meet with COL William L. Smith, Chief of Staff, Adjutant General of Texas, and CPT Smiley Garcia, Legislative Liaison Officer, Adjutant General of Texas, Those in attendance were: LTC (R) Ginny Alloway, USAF, Ret, MOAA National Board Member; COL Lee Lange, USMC, Ret, MOAA National Director, Council and Chapter Affairs; ; MAJ Jim Cunningham, USAR, Ret, President, Texas Council of Chapters; CAPT Bob Rymal, USN, Ret, TCC Immediate Past President; and, COL David Briggs, USA, Ret, TCC 2d VP – Legislative; and, MAJ Edwin S. Stone, III, USA, Ret, Editor, The Border Bulletin, El Paso Chapter, MOAA. TAG office call photo, attendees left to right:

(NOTE: PICTURE REMOVED FOR TCC)

A relationship to further personnel issues of the Texas Military Forces in cooperation between the staff of The AG and TCC was established.

Two 81st Exceptional Budgetary Items of concern to the Texas AG, "Priority 7-\$871,400: Additional resources to provide counseling services for Texas Military Forces soldiers returning from deployments and Priority 8-\$2,000,000: Additional resources for

State Tuition Assistance Program, in addition to the four that TCC had taken a position on for this particular meeting with our Legislators.”

Colonel Smith, Chief of Staff, TX AG, arranged an additional office call with Ray Lindner, Executive Director, National Guard Association of Texas (NGAT). The MOAA national officers and TCC leadership, all attending the earlier office call attended the meeting with the Executive Director, NGAT, were well received. Furthermore, we have forged a relationship permitting both parties to work together in the future on issues that will be mutually beneficial to our military personnel.

No-Host Dinner with TCC members at Guero's on South Congress and Elizabeth.

TCC conducted an organizational meeting at 8 PM to address meeting with legislators and issues for advocacy. The four issues chosen were: 1. Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children. This is a National effort put forth by DoD and already accepted by about 17 states that MOAA National and the Texas Council of Chapters - MOAA are supporting and hope to have adopted in Texas. Basically it puts military kids on a level playing field when they move to Texas so that they don't have to do a lot of additional work to qualify to Texas Educational requirements, e.g. Texas History, TACS qualifications, etc...Senator Leticia Van de Putte has filed SB 90 and Rep. Susan King filed HB 174, proposing adoption of the Interstate Compact bill. We would like to encourage our legislators to support this effort and these two bills.; 100% property tax reduction for 100% disabled veterans. Amendment to the Texas Constitution to permit this was passed in the 80th Session, voted on and passed by the people, but needs to have enabling passed during this session to put it into place.; 3. Extension of the Hazelwood Act that would allow the benefit to be passed on to family members if not used by the service member and removal of restrictive language from the current Act which allows certain Texas Universities to refuse Texas Veterans the use of the Acts benefits.; and, 4. Creation of a lottery scratch-off card that would benefit veterans and veterans programs in Texas. The resulting money would flow through the Texas Veterans Assistance Fund for disbursement to eligible and qualified veterans and veterans programs.

Administration: Capitol Parking – get handicapped access to Capitol Grounds from the Senate Sergeant at Arms, entrance off 15th from Congress driving to left of TxDPS Guard House, or car pool from the hotel to Capitol Visitor Parking between 12th and 13th and San Jacinto and Trinity Streets. Leave before 7am to beat traffic and meet in Capitol cafeteria for breakfast for talk from Veterans Commission. Begin office calls early. Make last office call no later than 2pm. Get Capitol maps <http://www.tspb.state.tx.us/SPB/plan/FloorPlan/Complex.htm> Plan order to visit offices as there is a good deal of walking involved...at least fifteen to thirty minutes between calls of ten minutes each.

Develop packets of one page issue briefs to drop with legislators or staffs...Jim Cunningham developed and printed some wonderful examples to use. Dave Briggs developed a great outline.

February 5:

Find your legislators by typing your County into to the search box:

<http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/county.aspx>

Develop plan of visiting offices so that the locations are grouped closely so they flow from one to the next.

Work your plan so that you can see your primaries first as not all will be in the office. The Chief of Staff or the Legislative person will be the ones that work the issues for your Senator or Representative...make sure you see these key staffers.

Explain to those Representatives in whose Districts that you are not a direct constituent that you represent those members of your organization that are their constituents.

Offices visited:

Senate District 29-- Senator Eliot Shapleigh Capitol Office: EXT E1.610 Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0129	House District 79-- Representative Joe C. Pickett Capitol Office: EXT E1.308 Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0596	House District 76-- Representative Norma Chavez Capitol Office: CAP GN.8 Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0622
House District 77-- Representative Marisa Marquez Capitol Office: EXT E2. 704 Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0638	House District 78-- Representative Joseph E. Moody Capitol Office: EXT E1.208 Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0728	House District 75-- Representative Chente Quintanilla Capitol Office: EXT E1.218 Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0613

(NOTE: PICTURE REMOVED FOR TCC) Judy and I met with either the Chief of Staff or Legislative point of contact in each office save one, Joe Pickett, House District 79. Joe waited to see us before heading back to El Paso. We were received well by all. Each office were aware of the military personnel issues we are concerned with and appeared favorably disposed to support all of them. Of exceptional note was the gracious manner in which Joe Pickett and his Chief of Staff, Ms. Katharine Chambers, greeted and received us. Picture of the two of us with Joe in his 1950s Soda Shop Congressional outer reception area decor made by Ms. Chambers, above.

NOTE: PICTURE REMOVED FOR TCC) Louraine Robertson, TCC Treasurer, and Jim Cunningham, 2008 – 2009 TCC President during 2/5 Wrap-up Meeting of day's activities, which began late as last appointment was at 3pm.

NOTE: PICTURE REMOVED FOR TCC) Ruby and Ed Marvin, Alamo Chapter, San Antonino, at MOAA national hosted social hour for four states, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, beginning at 7pm followed by Dinner at 8. Presidents training workshop on 2/6 was for these four states.

February 6:

NOTE: PICTURE REMOVED FOR TCC)Judy and I participated in a national MOAA Chapter Presidents leadership workshop conducted by: Colonel Lee Lange, Director, right, Councils and Chapters – Introduction and Chapter Communications; Bancroft McKittrick, left, MOAA National Board - Chapter Organization and Leadership Succession and Grass Roots Legislative Support, Jerry Bowen, not pictured, MOAA National Board – Recruiting and Retention and Community Involvement, and Carolyn Epling, center in photo, Albuquerque, New Mexico.- Role of Auxiliary Membership.

Impressions:

- National leadership is well meaning and dynamic but same old cookie cutter approach to making strong chapters...nothing presented that the El Paso Chapter leadership has not tried...El Paso Chapter is far ahead of the curve on innovation...only problem, nothing national is proffering works and what we do does not appear to be working either with regards to chapter membership...our strength is in our Active Duty initiatives and committee chairs on our Board.
- Recommendations made on end of session critique are not new either: get us email addresses to us; do away with current chapter system by putting all national members in a zipcode catchment area into a chapter; quit wasting time chasing chapter membership; assign active national members making them electronic members and redirect effort to pursuing national membership; share part of national dues with chapters to set off costs; tailor chapter organization to size and resources; teach and tailor chapter non-dues income and administrative programs to chapter size...Alamo and El Paso, for instance, will differ from Oil Patch; and, go recruit Active Force...end national's unfunded mandates and expectations.
- Dispense with the Affiliate system...it creates a "we, they" or "them, us" adversarial relationship between the Chapter and MOAA.
- Previously recommended last year to national - make membership to Guard and Reserve available by electronic means...if they want the hard copy magazine and access to other benefits, let them join and take out a fee membership to national.
- The Auxiliary business is a different matter at the El Paso Chapter than at national...the surviving spouses pay dues but may neither hold office nor vote on matters of national policy and organization...the El Paso Chapter includes surviving spouses as full dues paying members including holding chapter offices and board positions and voting on matters of governance. The El Paso Chapter has seen no reason to treat our surviving spouses as less than full members. Our outreach and assistance to surviving spouses is at the same level as all other members. The El Paso Chapter is ahead of national in this respect as are most other chapters.

Thoughts:

Having attended the 2d Advocating on the Hill with TCC in 2007, the 2009 event was better...our organization is becoming stronger and more organized...the leadership is improving the effort based on the prior legislative event.

We should begin earlier based on queries made by TCC leadership as to an optimum time...some say before Thanksgiving prior to the legislative year...for instance, after November 1, 2010, and prior to Thanksgiving for the February 2011 82d Legislative Session. There is the additional school of thought that we should begin even earlier if new legislation is considered for a session so that it can be written. It may be worth considering, based on information from another contact, to start as the September prior to the convening of the Legislature...maybe begin in the local offices with initial contacts with the principals.

All legislators are important...and, it is just important to consider targeting key committees, leadership and members in the total effort...Finance, State Affairs, and Veterans Affairs and Military Installations and its subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure in The Senate and in The House, Appropriations and State Affairs.

Continue pursuing a long term association with the Texas Military and the National Guard Association of Texas pursuing personnel issues that better the lives of our military, Active, Retired, Survivors, and National Guard.

Recommendations:

- Begin organizing early, develop issues before 1 October Even Years and begin contact legislators between 1 October and Thanksgiving.
- Work with AG and NGAT to include those issues of importance to them in our activities.
- Develop uniform format for presentation, one page talking papers per issue, folders to leave with legislator's and staffs with contact information.
- Have leaders in chapters in districts concentrate on contacting key committees in both Houses, Finance, State Affairs, and Veterans Affairs and Military Installations and its subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure in The Senate and in The House, Appropriations and State Affairs. For instance, ask all GOs in the Alamo Chapter area make contact with current Veterans Affairs and Military Installations and its subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure Chair in The Senate...again, target the important committees, leadership and members and include them in your lobbying efforts especially if they are from your Districts.
- Develop numbers to use in initial briefing paper to demonstrate the reach of the military, number of Active Duty, number in the Military Coalition, number of retirees, Veterans, surviving spouses, number in MOAA national in State, 34,000 at present...and, so on...
- Know what the Dollar impact of what we are asking for and how many it will reach...way the pay-out and expected result will be...we need to be well informed...
- Be prepared to have someone well qualified to testify on these issues.
- Use email...the staffers tell us it is the most effective way to communicate with your elected representative, Senate and House.
- Use same subject line on all emails to legislators and send them thousands of copies, each from single constituents.
- Set up website with something mirroring national's Legislative Action Center for TCC...a short message with one liners on Bills of concern linked to the one page talking paper for copy and pasting to the email message the State has for contacting them...use same format developed for one pagers to be left with contacts in their offices...Jim Cunningham developed excellent one page drops for the 81st Advocating on the Hill this year...encourage national organizations to advertise the website and our suggested message and broadcast it through email to ask for the recipients to contact the representatives using the State site: There are 31 Senators <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/> and 150 Representatives <http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome.php?SortBy=district&AscDesc=DESC> Each has an online email address contact setup...

Respectfully submitted,
Edwin S. Stone, III, MAJ, USA, Retired
El Paso Chapter Representative to TCC for Advocating on the Hill, 2009
Editor, The Border Bulletin, and Immediate Past President

Consider this the After Actions Report from the Virginia Alloway/Ed Marvin team that advocated in Austin this past Thursday for our Veterans Issues.

First I want to say, in my considerable experience, I consider this the most successful effort we have had in the three advocating missions to Austin since the program started. The leave behinds were outstanding. I would comment that we perhaps should do a little bit better job in orienting the people who are going to the legislators offices. I had occasion to listen in on another presentation and it wasn't completely the way the legislation was crafted but my thoughts would be that it might be a good idea to try to get them to the participants a week or ten days in advance so that they can be studied and the people would be much more comfortable with the issues at the moment of briefing before we went on the actual mission on the hill.

My next comment would center around the relationship that we should continue try to build with the military coalition. It would be my considered opinion that a letter should be crafted by President Jim to the President of the Texas Military Coalition, Gene Overstreet, advising him that the Texas Council made its bi-annual trip to the legislature and, among other things, that the approved military coalition priority items were given full consideration and discussed with the legislators as we made our trip around the Capitol. As you know I am kind of a political animal and everything such as that really does help.

Other than that I have no other comments. Thank you for the invitation, thank you for your respective leadership of the Council - quite honestly that's what keeps the council going, involved people like you.

Respectfully,
Ed Marvin

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After-Action Report: Advocacy on the Hill, Texas 81st Session, 5 Feb 2009
By: Pat Christ, President, Central Texas Chapter, MOAA, 10 Feb 2009

House District 46--Representative **Dawna Dukes**
Capitol Office: EXT E1.504
Counties Represented: Travis (part)
Met with Mellissa, Staff Member - Receptive to all issues presented.
Left Hand-out materials.

House District 55--Representative **Ralph Sheffield**

Capitol Office: EXT E1.422

Counties Represented: Bell (part)

Met with Rep. Sheffield – Receptive to all issues, except lottery proposal, opposes all gambling, Requested in-lieu of lottery, funding of Veterans Commission by any means, appeared to be receptive. Left Hand-out materials.

House District 58--Representative **Rob Orr**

Capitol Office: EXT E1.410

Counties Represented: Bosque, Johnson

Met with: Mathew Miller, Chief of Staff.

Receptive of all issues. Questioned the impact on cities and counties with the passage of the Legislation enabling constitutional amendment on exemption from ad valorem property tax. My answer: very little since there are a small number of totally disabled vets and they are spread across the state. Miller is a veteran was in the Marine Reserves and served a tour in Iraq he is a good advocate for veterans.

Left Hand-out materials.

House District 50--Representative **Mark Strama**

Capitol Office: EXT E2.510

Counties Represented: Travis (part)

Met with: Mary Throop, Chief of Staff

Very Receptive of all issues. Rep. Strama has introduced a bill giving children of deployed soldiers an authorized absence from school to visit with family when the deployed soldier is home on mid-tour leave. Have requests MOAA support of this bill. Throop is an excellent advocate on all veteran's issues, married to a retired Army Officer, who is a member of MOAA.

Left Hand-out materials.

House District 52--Representative **Diana Maldonado**

Capitol Office: EXT E2.802

Counties Represented: Williamson (part)

Met with: Jasser Awad, Legislative Aide

Receptive to all issues presented.

Left Hand-out materials.

House District 20--Representative **Dan Gattis**

Capitol Office: EXT E2.212

Counties Represented: Milam, Williamson (part)

Met with: Darryl Pool, Legislative Assistant

Receptive to all issues presented.

Left Hand-out materials.

General Comments:

No need to start early, members are not at the office until 0830hrs. or later, Cafeteria does not open until 0730hrs.

Hand –out packages are a must. Leaving information for Representatives and their staff on the issues that you want them to take action is imperative; there are too many issues in a legislative session for them to keep up with.

Most appointments last about 15 minutes.

Keep the number of major issues to four, if you have other issues, have them in writing and just leave them with whoever you visit.

If you want to visit with the Representative or Senator you need to be from their district or have someone in your party be from that district.

ADVOCATING THE HILL AFTER ACTION REPORT

Our being such a small chapter, I asked Gil Rodriquez of the Alamo Chapter if he and I could go together. The Alamo chapter said yes.

We went to talk to Representative Eddie Lucio Jr. from Camerion County. He was positive in his responsive to each request. This being especially because we did not really ask for a great deal of dollars immediately. We left the talking papers and the list of Military Coalition with him. He liked both of these. He said his father was really busy that day. Lucio Jr. will talk to Lucio Sr. We drew his attention to the notation of House and Senate bill numbers and sponsor listed at the bottom of the talking papers.

We also went to talk to Representative Aaron Pena from Edinburg. We left the same papers with him. He especially liked the notation of the House and Senate bill numbers and sponsors. His secretary was to look these up and tell him of the contents of each. He also liked that it would cost few dollars now.

The balance of the day, I spent going with Gil to see members representing his districts. We got even better response from them.

Legislators visited were:

District 40--Representative Aaron Pena

District 38--Representative Eddie Lucio

District 123--Representative Mike Villarreal

District 124--Representative Jose Menendez

Alice Karr, Secretary
Rio Grande Valley
Chapter 27

SUBJECT: After Action Report for 5 February Advocating The Hill

BACKGROUND: The Chapter was assigned 11 House/Senate districts to meet with and discuss TCC recommended pending legislation issues. Of the assigned districts, only 8 were made available for a visit. Those districts were:

House District 1 - Rep. Stephen J. Frost
3 - Rep. Mark Homer
4 - Rep. Betty J. Brown
6 - Rep. Leo Berman
7 - Rep. Tommy Merritt
9 - Rep. Wayne Christian
11 - Rep. Chuck L. Hopson

Senate District 3 - Sen. Robert Nichols

The districts that no visit was made are:

House District 5 - Rep. Bryan Hughes

Senate District 1 - Sen. Kevin Eltife
7 - Sen. Dan Patrick

DISCUSSION: Each office visit was well received. Only one Legislator was at home (Leo Berman), all other visits were with either the Chief of Staff or Legislative Assistant. However, it didn't seem to matter if the "big cheese" was there or not. I thought the people I talked with were interested in the issues being discussed and the purpose that I was there for. It was realistic to believe that when the words military, veterans and families were spoken everyone's ears perked up. Once I had their attention, it was easy to have a give and take conversation about each of the issues being recommended. I left each meeting with the indication that our recommendations would be given immediate attention. I have confirmation that Rep. Berman (House District 6) took action and supported our recommendations. At this point, I do not know about the others that were visited. Some key things that helped make a successful meeting:

- Take sufficient time to explain the purpose and objectives of MOAA.
- Talk about support to the entire military community from veterans to families.
- The identification of each pending bill associated with the recommended issue. This was an advantage and greatly appreciated by those I talked to.
- The use of left behind documentation.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue and try to expand this program and find some way to encourage more chapter participation.

Three Chapter Members visited the offices of fifteen Representatives and three Senators who represent our members from districts in the greater Dallas area. Our Chapter President, Bill Lavallee, a Past President, Bob Rymal and our VP for Legislative, Dave Briggs presented material and arguments to these State Legislators supporting various issues that affect Veterans, Active Duty and Reserves/National Guard. We argued our requests for support in two ways; the first was by emphasizing the needs for action and the expected effect of their support. The second argument centered about the cost-effectiveness of their support; how small the costs were in comparison with the beneficial

effect on their constituents and the goodwill engendered in district voters by our advertising of their support.

Our being the spokesman for not just our 34,000 Texas members but also for the much larger "Military Coalition" was noted as a part of every plea for support. This appeared to lend more credence to our support requests.

Several lessons were learned during our visits. We left paperwork that buttressed each verbal argument that we made so that the material we left could be referred to in the future. A listing of those House and Senate Bills for which we had particular interest was also given to them. These "permanent records" were seen by the Representatives, Senators and their staff members as being very valuable. We also found that it would be very effective to remind these legislators of their promises of support when the pertinent Bills reach the legislative floor. [A means to do this should be developed by the Texas Council of Chapters.]

After returning to Dallas we wrote personal thank you notes to each of the legislators who we visited. This hand-written correspondence may make it easier for our members to be seen on any future visits. We also have plans to visit each of these members when they have public local office meetings in their home districts.

A report of our visit to Austin was made in the President's Message of our monthly Newsletter, the Reporter, so that our entire Chapter may be made more aware of what Bills we are supporting and why.

Bill Lavallee, President
Greater Dallas Chapter

Jerry E. Jackson
After Action Report: Advocating on the Hill

This is the after action report from the East Texas Chapter's "Advocating on the Hill," Feb.4-6, 2009 held in Austin, Texas.

The East Texas Chapter has five legislative representatives: Senate District 5 and House Districts 12, 13, 15, 16, and 18. Appointment to visit with the individual representatives and senator were made three weeks prior to this conference. The meetings and results of each are as follows:

Senate District # 5. Senator Steve Ogden was not available, however I was able to meet with his Military Affairs Committee person, Pattie Guerra, at 4:00 pm on the 4th. This was prior to receiving the handouts provided at the TCC meeting later that evening. I did, however, discuss the four main significant veterans legislation points and other comments provided by David Briggs in his email to all of us. Ms. Guerra was very receptive to our efforts and assured me she would review all pending legislation concerning the military.

House District #12. Representative Jim McReynolds met with me. He was fully aware of most of the pending legislation affecting military veterans. He stated his district has a national guard unit on it's third deployment to Iraq. He also stated, he was actively

supporting many of the legislative bills affecting the military. He took my letter and the handouts provided by TCC and MOAA for later review.

House District # 13. Representative Lois Kolkhorst met with me for approximately 40 minutes. She was very receptive to our issues and assured me she would support legislative issues concerning the military.

House Districts # 15,16 and 18. Representatives Rob Eissler, Brandon Creighton, and John Otto respectively were unable to visit with me . Their aides listened to my comments and were receptive to the issues. I left my letter with the four significant veteran legislative issues and the handouts provided by TCC and National MOAA. The aides assured me that their respective representatives would receive them and that each representative is interested in supporting legislation that impacted on the military. Brandon Creighton's aide took lots of notes to brief Rep.Creighton.

General comments: I found that each office contacted expressed an interest in our advocating legislation that was for all military units. The fact that they have National Guard and Reserve Units being deployed on active duty has raised their awareness and willingness to support the military issues. I found that the letter and the map of the capital building provided by David Briggs to be of great assistance. Thanks David. As a final observation, bills that were revenue neutral were the best received.

Jerry E. Jackson
President East Texas Chapter MOAA
East Texas Chapter MOAA

Heart of Texas Chapter MOAA – TX-07

- Two officers of the HOT Chapter participated in the 5 February Legislature Visit and MOAA Workshop: Jon Ker, COL,USA (ret), 1st Vice-President and Vince Tobola LtCol,USAF (ret), Treasurer and Immediate Past President.
- There were a total of five Representatives and one Senate offices visited. One Representative was available, Charles “Doc” Anderson, District 56, and other visits were with various staff personnel.
- The following offices and personnel were contacted:
 - State Representative Charles “Doc” Anderson, District 56
 - Office of State Representative Jim Dunnam, District 57 and Jenny Casey, Legislative Director
 - Office of State Senator Kip Averitt, District 22 and Josh Meeks, Legislative Director and Communications Director
 - Office of State Representative Jim Pitts, District 10 and Jason Nelson, Legislative Aide
 - Office of State Representative Byron Cook, District 8 and Jay W. Hodge, Legislative Aide
 - Office of State Representative Fred Brown, District 14 and Melissa Nicholas, Chief of Staff

- Representative Doc Anderson was very appreciated of having the fact sheet available for his use and his staff and took note of the military issues that were discussed. The fact sheet with its general discussion and specific points was well received by all the other offices and is an item that needs to be repeated in future visits to the legislature and to individual district offices whenever done. Members of the legislature have thousands of bills in the system and focusing on few select bills or military bills as a list proves very useful in their handling of bills to focus support on during the relatively short session of six months out of every two years.
 - In general, the legislative staff members were all receptive of our military fact sheet and appreciative of having a simple document to use and provide to other staff members and their Representative or Senator. Again, I would continue this fact sheet with probably no more than four key points. The staff was also welcomed the list of military related bills that was provided to the Chapter representatives before visiting the offices. This is another item worth repeating.
 - Overall, HOT Chapter concurs that this effort is worthwhile and needs to be repeated and with as much participation from other chapters as practical. We appreciate the hard work and organization by the members of the Texas Council of Chapters. The advance information on assignment of chapters for the various legislature offices, the information on the Capitol maps and building layouts, and the hotel accommodation all worked well. The MOAA Workshop was very useful in getting an update across the board in short time on chapter related tools and information updates and allows new and previous chapter officer attendees to get first hand information from National MOAA. Again, both the February visit to the Capitol offices and the Workshop were great.
 - For any questions or added information, please contact Vince Tobola, 254-709-7489 or vtobola@aol.com .
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AFTER ACTION REPORT-Austin TX

The new President of the MOAA-HA (Houston Area) attended "Advocating on the Hill" activities on February 4 & 5, 2009 at Austin TX. Preplanning was accomplished prior to travel, using data furnished by MOAA-TCC.

Appointments were scheduled with seven (7) Legislators for the day of February 5, 2009 (House districts 28, 126, 136, 138, 141, 143, 149). Seven of seven Chiefs of Staff, plus one Legislator, were very cordial and happily received the issue hand-outs and a bit of verbal discussion. Notes were seen being taken and written on the documents. We were complimented about four times for having simple and clear single issue pages, rather than verbal only. These visits were made jointly with Joe Kossan representing the Ft. Clark Chapter, Del Rio, TX. This worked well as both being first timers at legislative activity.

A verbal report was brought before the chapter board meeting, February 24, 2009. The board voted to:

- * Participate in the next "Advocating on the Hill", presumed to be about February 2011.
- * Remain a non-dues paying Chapter as concerns TCC.

Unofficially, as regards the second item, the MOAA-HA Board of Directors want to see more useful, practical and mutually beneficial activities that would equate with the personal expenses and time sacrifices made by Chapter Officers attending quarterly meetings and the Chapter's treasury loss of the "Head count" dues each year. The current relationship is satisfactory with the board until more information is received and/or after the next "Advocating on the Hill" for a revisit of the issue.

The MOAA-HA President remained an additional day in Austin, February 6, 2009, for the MOAA-National sponsored "Chapters Presidents' Leaders Workshop". Excellent presentations were made.

This concludes the Chapter's "After Action Report".

James C. Causey, Ch, President (COL USA Ret)

PS: This serves as the Ft. Clark report as well.

Military Officers Association of America *Wichita Falls Chapter*

After Action Report

The Wichita Falls Chapter participated in the February 5, ²⁰⁰⁹ "Advocacy on the Hill" in Austin, Texas. Representing our Chapter was LTC Larry Petrash, Chapter President and LTC Cleve Pratt, Chapter Legislative Committee Chairman. We discussed the following issues:

1. Adoption of the Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children, which is designed to ease the transition between school systems resulting from military moves, over which military families have little or no control. The Compact is expected to improve records transfers, reduce repetitive courses, and improve opportunities for advancement, college admission acceptance and scholarships. With its many military bases and very high number of military families, it is unthinkable that Texas should not adopt this Compact. (S.B. 90; H.B.s 174, 503)
2. Adoption of various pending legislation, all of which is meritorious, the effect of which is to reduce the cost of and improve access to higher education for veterans and their families, thereby securing the economic benefit to Texas of attracting and retaining the most productive veterans to the State. (S.B.s 28, 93, 114, 200; H.B. 333)

3. Adoption of enabling legislation to fully permit the exemption from ad valorem property taxes on the residence

homesteads of disabled veterans to the extent allowed by Proposition 9 (which has already been approved by Texas

voters in November, 2007) amending Section 2(b), Article VIII of the Texas Constitution.

This is a small way in which

to assist these veterans who have sacrificed so much on our behalf. (S.B. 469; H.B. 742)

4. Adoption of legislation prohibiting ad valorem tax increases on residence homesteads of members of reserve

components of the armed forces, including the Texas National Guard, while serving on active duty, thereby

reducing somewhat the economic burden upon Texas citizens called to active duty. (H.B. 69)

To assure as much coverage of the areas constituents, we not only visited our Chapter's District Representatives but also with Representatives from our areas surrounding Districts as follows:

Personally visited with Representative David Farabee (District 69 consisting of Wichita, Archer Counties)

Personally visited with Representative Rick Hardcastle (District 68 consisting of Motley, Dickens, Cottle, King, Hardeman, Foard, Knox, Haskell, Wilbarger, Baylor, Throckmorton, Young, Jack, Clay, Montague, Cooke Counties)

Personally visited with Representative David Swinford (District 87 consisting of Sherman, Moore, Potter, Carson Counties)

Personally visited with Representative Warren Chisum (District 88 consisting of Parmer, Bailey, Lamb, Castro, Swisher, Armstrong, Briscoe, Hall, Donley, Collingsworth, Childress, Gray, Wheeler, Hutchinson, Roberts, Hemphill, Lipscomb, Ochiltree, Hansford Counties).

Personally visited with Representative John Smithee's Chief of Staff Andrea Stingley (District 86 consisting of Dallam, Hartley, Oldham, Deaf Smith, Randall Counties).

We were unable to visit Senator Craig Estes (District 30) personally but did speak with and aide. Senator Estes was not in Austin at the time. She was very helpful and referred us to Senator Estes' Legislative Aide in Wichita Falls.

In all cases, everyone welcomed us into their offices. They graciously gave us all the time we needed to discuss our issues. Everyone we actually talked with viewed the issues as being important to their constituency and, most importantly, each was supportive of MOAA's position on each of the issues. We came away from the whole experience well pleased. We felt we accomplished many goals:

1. We showed members of the Texas Legislature that we, as a group, really care about, and are knowledgeable of, the legislative issues they deal with on a daily basis.
2. We established a good liaison with our representatives and feel free to contact them with regard to future legislation.
3. This was a great opportunity to educate them about MOAA as well as show them that we are a strong, influential part of their constituency.

The joint Texas Council of Chapters / Midwest Regional Council and the Chapter Leader's Workshop meeting on Friday, February 6, were great. The presentations stressing the workshop's goals, i.e., the importance of the Chapter system, the focus on chapter management, the opportunity to share experiences and the opportunity to learn more about MOAA's chapter support was enlightening. Rosalinda Babin's story of nursing her son Alan back to reasonable health from devastating wounds sustained in Iraq was truly inspiring. His wheelchair is truly a technological achievement.

Meeting Logistics:

The Wyndham Garden Hotel was great and very convenient to the State Capitol building.

We thought the meeting went very well. It is particularly good to see representatives from MOAA national at these meetings. Special thanks to Col. Lee Lange, Director of Council & Chapter Affairs, for his efforts in setting up the joint regional meeting on Friday. Also his efforts to assist the TCC and the member chapters is recognized and appreciated.

Recommendation: It would have been better to have our meeting with John Miterko, Veteran's Advocate, on Wednesday evening. Having it in the cafeteria on Thursday morning was not that effective because many people could not hear what he was saying and it was very early. Therefore paying attention to his comments was very difficult.

Overall, this was a very effective effort and was well orchestrated by the Texas Council of Chapters.

Respectfully Submitted:

Larry D. Petrash
Lieutenant Colonel (Retired), U.S. Army
President, Wichita Falls Chapter