

2019 CONFERENCE RECAP

By Tina Kish, Conference Manager

The San Antonio heat fueled the enthusiasm of NCOA members who gathered at the El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel on July 16-18 for the 55th Annual NCOA Conference and Vanguard Awards Banquet.



The Resolutions Committee, chaired by CMSgt (Ret) Bonnie Cooper, met on Tuesday afternoon to help set the Association's legislative course for the coming year. The Committee will be reviewing the Association's resolutions for relevance and continued need.

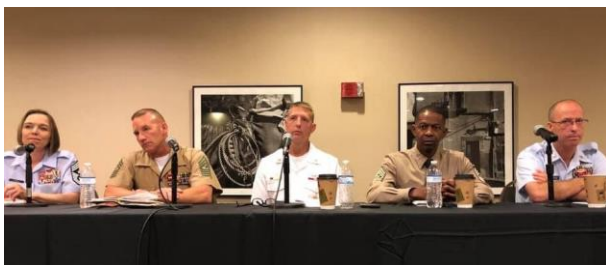
The Opening Icebreaker – Texas Bar-B-Que – was a themed event. Delegates donned their most comfortable Texas attire and mixed and mingled. Typical Bar-B-Que fare was plentiful – the perfect recipe for a night to remember!

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Accomplishing the business of the Association continued on Wednesday with the Opening Ceremony. NCOA President Vincent Patton welcomed the delegates. As always, we are grateful to the Senior Enlisted Leadership Panel members who took time from their busy schedules to attend the conference and update our delegates on what was happening in their respective services. Representing the Sergeant Major of the Army was CSM Michael A. Crosby, Command Sergeant Major U.S. Army Futures

Command; representing the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps was Sergeant Major Richard Thresher, Sergeant Major of the II Marine Expeditionary Force; representing the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy was FLTCM Wesley Koshoffer, Fleet Master Chief, Manpower, Personnel,



Training and Education; representing the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force was CMSgt Juliet C. Gudgel, Command Chief Master Sergeant Air Educational and Training Command; and, representing the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard was MCPO George Williamson Anderson, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve.

Small and Large Regional Chapters of the Year were recognized. President Vince Patton presented the prestigious President's Award to Sir Paul Siverson for his selfless work on behalf of NCOA and our military members and their families. Auxiliary President Dianne Carnahan and Vice President Ronda Smith presented the Auxiliary President's

Award to NCOA President Vincent Patton in recognition of his continued support of the International Auxiliary. New Rats MSgt Jason McKinley, MSgt Kory Morton, and Scott Rodowick were recognized.

During the afternoon, delegates convened for the NCOA Annual Business Meeting where changes to the Association's By-Laws were approved and members were elected to the Board of Directors. Elected to serve on the Board of Directors were MSgt Robert Barnett, USAF (Ret), of Huntsville, AL, and Vicky Hensley, USMC Veteran, of Abilene, TX.



Meanwhile, members of the International Auxiliary attended the Auxiliary's Annual Business Meeting where Ashley Gardner of Colorado Springs, CO, Gloria Martinez of Abilene, TX, and Sue Ytzen of Colorado Springs, CO, were elected to serve on the Auxiliary Board of Directors. The Auxiliary's outstanding performers for 2018 were recognized - Betsy Ross Top Recruiter Award was presented to the Gateway Auxiliary and Angela Gardner received the Top Supporter Award.

Throughout the remainder of the day, delegates attended the Chapter Session and learned what various chapters were doing in their respective areas. Thank you to the individuals and chapters that made donations during the Parade of Checks. Thanks to the individual and chapter efforts on the home front and the delegates at the convention, more than \$15,000 was raised to benefit Association's benevolent programs.

The Knights of the Square Table held their annual assembly to accomplish the business of the Knights of the Square Table – new Knights were dubbed, existing Knights were elevated, fallen Knights were honored, the course for the upcoming year was set and Lady Sunny Wirth of San Antonio, TX assumed the mantle as Grand Knight.

The stars shined brightly on Wednesday evening during the Vanguard Awards Banquet where CMSgt (Ret) Jim Sullivan once again served as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Hats off to Jim for a job extremely well done!



NCOA's superstar chapters were recognized. The Rogue Chapter from Medford, OR, was recognized as the 2018 Outstanding Large Chapter of the Year and the Frontier Chapter from Cheyenne, WY, was named the 2018 Outstanding Small Chapter of the Year. The Gateway Auxiliary from New Port Richey, FL, received the 2018 Auxiliary Chapter of the Year Award.



The guest speaker for the evening was HMCS (SWC/FMF) Jaclyn N. Place, a past recipient of the NCOA Military Vanguard Award. Following Place's stirring remarks, the focus turned to the reason

for the evening - honoring this year's heroic Military Vanguard Award recipients.

The amazing stories of SGT Antonio T. Adams, U.S. Army, Cpl Daniel B. Aguirre Vargas, U.S. Marine Corps, HM2 (FMF) Axel A. Wong, U.S. Navy, TSgt Levi T. Owen, U.S. Air Force, and BM2 Tracy L. Mannes, U.S. Coast Guard, had delegates glued to their seats with tears in their eyes. Check out the Vanguard stories [elsewhere on the NCOA website.](#)



Thursday morning was the Breakfast with the Board – nothing like a hot breakfast to start the day off right as delegates prepared to depart amid promises to keep in touch and choruses of “see you next year.”

We would be remiss if we didn't thank our generous affinity partners and sponsors whose support helped make this year's conference a resounding success. A huge THANKS to our overall sponsors USAA and University of Phoenix, and to our Vanguard Sponsors USAA, University of Phoenix, NCOA JROTC Program, Southern New Hampshire University and GEICO Military. Special thanks to 4/5 Cattle Company, Aligned Mortgage, Army Air Force Exchange Service, Big Rentz, Columbia Southern University, Defender Wood Bracelets, LLC, Dragon Hill Lodge, Excelsior College, Frost Bank, HEB, Jordan Ford, Korea Defense Veterans Association, Koridoor Tours, Kwon's Engraving Shop, Mad Women Marketing, NCOA International Auxiliary, NCOA Jefferson State Chapter, NCOA Knights of the Square Table, NCOA Mountain Post Chapter, NCOA Rocky Mountain Knights Council, NCOA Trails End Auxiliary, Professional Performance Development Group, Inc., Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union, Starbucks Coffee, The Wash Tub, The Zebra, United Healthcare, U.S. Veterans Magazine, Veterans United, Walmart, and Xpert Media Management.