



Greetings Members and Friends,



November will be a busy month with Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and some darn good football. I cannot think of a better way to kick start November than by attending our Chapters Dinner/Meeting on November 7th. We had 3 new members and 2 members attending their first meeting at the October meeting. Attending the Dinner/Meeting will be a great way to welcome our new members.

Birmingham's Veterans Day activities begin with a Patriotic Program and Stepstones ceremony to honor Alabama Veterans, at the Alabama Veterans Memorial Park on November 10<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1pm. Our Chapter members are major contributors to the organization, logistics, and conduct of the ceremonies. I would like to personally thank all GBC members who volunteer their time and expertise to support this event.

Our Chapter Veteran of the Year, LtCol Don Lehman, USMCR (Ret) will be recognized at the National Veterans Day Award Dinner on November 10<sup>th</sup>. I encourage you to attend and support Don.

As we move into the holiday season, I would like to thank all members for your contributions to protecting servicemembers and veterans earned benefits by interacting with our Alabama legislators. Our collective voices truly do make an impact. I would also like to recognize the work many of you do to support Veteran activities in the Birmingham Area. Our collective efforts, and those through other VSOs, make a tremendous impact on the lives of veterans who are not as fortunate as most of us.

The next meeting is November 7th; social hour begins at 6:00pm. Hope to see you all there!

Respectfully,

*Wes*

(See Dates to Remember on page

Volume 119 Issue 11 November 2019

## *Officers' Call*

### **Greater Birmingham Chapter Military Officers Association of America**

*President* Wes Cox, Col, USA (Ret)

*1<sup>st</sup> VP* Mac Chandler, LTC, USA (Ret)

*2<sup>nd</sup> VP* Don Lehman, LTC, USMC (Ret)

*Treasurer* Doug Markham, CAPT, USN(Ret)

*Secretary* Ginger Branson, LTC, USA (Ret)

*Past Pres.* Thomas Ruffing, LTC, USA (Ret)

*Director* J.D. Crawford, Col, USA (Ret)

*Director* Robert Williams, Maj, USA (Ret)

*Director* Vacant

*Chaplain* Mac Chandler, LTC, USA (Ret)

*TOPS Liaison* Al Wood, LTC, USA (Ret)

*Legislative Affairs* Wes Cox, Col, USA (Ret)

*Personal Affairs* Anne Hartline

*Surviving Spouse Liaison* Donna Martin

*Newsletter* Linda DeMarco, LTC. USA (Ret)

### **Statement of Publication**

Officer's Call is the newsletter of the Greater Birmingham Chapter—Military Officers Association of America. It is published once each month to inform the membership of issues and activities of interest to all.

GBC MOAA is a non-profit 501(c)19 entity in the state of Alabama organized to represent the membership and to support the activities of the Alabama Council and MOAA National.

MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are non-partisan.

Advertising contained in the newsletter is not endorsed by MOAA or its affiliate the Greater Birmingham Chapter, and does not represent any recommendation to the membership. Opinions expressed in articles contained herein are not necessarily those of the membership as a whole or the Chapter. Questions should be directed to [newsletter@moaabirmingham.org](mailto:newsletter@moaabirmingham.org).

Thursday, November 7, 2019 Social 6:00 pm, Dinner at 6:30 pm

- **Cost:** \$26.00 per person
- Payment for meal is due at the door (checks are preferred).
- **Location:** Danberry at Inverness, 235 Inverness Center Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242.
- **Reservations:** **NOTE FOR NOVEMBER ONLY CONTACT DONNA MARTIN AT [donnaemaemartin@aol.com](mailto:donnaemaemartin@aol.com) OR (205) 408-4761 by Noon on Monday November 4, 2019 to make your reservation.** Note: Your reservation is not complete until you have received a confirmation call or email.

**Menu:** SALAD: Pear Salad with Cranberries, Walnuts, Over Spring Mix and House Dressing. ENTRÉE: Bourbon Street Chicken and Shrimp, Over Onions, And Mushrooms topped with Scampi Butter, Served with Mash Potatoes. DESSERT: Blueberry & Lemon Curd Crepe Topped with Whipped Cream

**Driving Instructions - Danberry at Inverness, 235 Inverness Center Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242**

- **Traveling from I-65** (South or North): Take the I-459 interchange toward Atlanta. Proceed north on I-459 and take Exit 19 onto Highway 280 toward Childersburg. Travel approx. 2.2 miles on Highway 280 and turn right onto Inverness Center Drive (Fresh Market shopping center on right). Travel approx. 1/2 mile and turn left into Danberry at Inverness.
- **Traveling South on I-459:** Take Exit 19 onto Highway 280 toward Childersburg. Travel approx. 2.2 miles on Highway 280 and turn right onto Inverness Center Drive (Fresh Market shopping center on right). Travel approx. 1/2 mile and turn left into Danberry at Inverness.
- **Traveling West on Highway 280:** Turn left onto Inverness Center Drive (Fresh Market shopping center on the left). Travel approx. 1/2 mile and turn left into Danberry at Inverness.

**Application for Membership/Renewal – Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA (Please print or type)**

First Name MI Last Name Grade Rank Preferred Name Name of Spouse  
Branch of Service: ☐ Army ☐ Air Force ☐ Navy ☐ Marines ☐ Coast Guard ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Status: ☐ Active Duty ☐ Retired ☐ National Guard ☐ Reserve ☐ Former Member ☐ Surviving Spouse

Mailing Address City State Zip Code  
Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
National MOAA Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_ National Membership Type: ☐ Basic ☐ Premium ☐ Life  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Renewal or ☐ New Membership (membership runs by calendar year)  
☐ Regular Membership or ☐ Surviving Spouse: ☐ \$20/year ☐ \$35/2 years ☐ \$50/3 years  
☐ Supporting Membership (\$50) or ☐ Sustaining Membership (\$100)  
☐ ROTC Affiliation (electronic communications only – no cost)



Mail this form to Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 530153, Birmingham, AL 35253





## NOVEMBER SPEAKER

Brian Crichton

President of Talladega Superspeedway.

As vice president of marketing and sales at Talladega, Crichton oversees consumer marketing, public relations, ticketing, partnership marketing and sales. Crichton and his Talladega staff created the popular Friday Night "Big One on the Blvd." fan event and elevated the track's traditional Saturday Night Infield Concert. He has overseen the development of successful programs for military, first responders, teachers and educators, kids, scouts and college students. He has also been a major contributor in the planning efforts of Transformation. In his new role, Crichton will report to Joie Chitwood, COO, ISC and oversee promotion and operation of the 2.66-mile Talladega Superspeedway, which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year.

"Brian has earned this promotion following nearly 10 years of valued leadership at Talladega," stated Chitwood. "His creative marketing efforts, community building and fan-first mentality have helped Talladega Superspeedway become the most fan-friendly track on NASCAR's schedule."

With nearly 20 years of motorsports industry experience, Crichton served in successful capacities at Daytona International Speedway, Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway. As vice president of special events and entertainment at Daytona International Speedway, he managed the 50th running of the DAYTONA 500 and grew marquee events including the Rolex 24 at Daytona, Bike Week and Biketoberfest.

"Brian is a strong promoter and Talladega's future is very bright with him at the wheel," said Lynch, who has been a staple at the track since 1993. "He has earned the trust and commitment of this team as they take 'Dega's storied legacy to new heights driving increased economic impact for the local community and the great state of Alabama."

Crichton and his wife Karen have two sons, Jackson and Cooper.

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

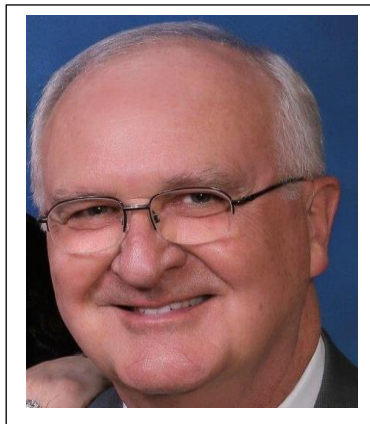
It's November, and for most Americans it is that singular time of the year that we celebrate our many blessings. Think about it. We are living in the most advanced country in the civilized world. We have electricity at our fingertips. We have clean drinking water with the simple turn of a knob. We all live in well-built homes that are heated and cooled and have good solid roofs above our heads. We go to sleep at night without fear of a missile attack. We attend whatever church that we desire to attend. We all have nice cars to drive on some of the best roadways in the world (well, maybe 280 is stretching that a bit!) But you get the drift of where I am going with this: WE ARE BLESSED BEYOND ALL MEASURE. And we only have one day that is officially called THANKSGIVING. This year it is on November 28<sup>th</sup>. We Americans should give our Thanksgiving every single day, because we are so blessed to live in this **exceptional** country.

Last year I recommended writing down on a piece of paper the first five things that come to your mind that you are thankful for. This year I would ask that you share your list with someone at your Thanksgiving table and have them do the same. Then pass this on to your Facebook friends. Hopefully you will start something that will remind your family and friends what is Important in their lives.

This November 28th think about all our service men and women serving all over the world, who will not be with their wives, husbands, children loved ones on this Thanksgiving Day.... because they are serving our country. Include them in your Thanksgiving prayer this year. May we never lose sight of the vision our forefathers had for this great country.

(Continued on page 5)

## **2019 VETERAN OF THE YEAR**



**Greater Birmingham Chapter, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)**

**2019 Veteran of the Year**

**LtCol Donald (Don) D. Lehman, USMCR (Ret)**

Don Lehman graduated from the University of Iowa and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1969. He served three years on active duty, including a tour in Vietnam with the First Marine Division and an additional 20 years in the Marine Corp reserves, retiring in 1992.

Don's civilian career as a petroleum geologist, spanned forty plus years working for multi-national oil companies as well as smaller entities, with final retirement from Energen Resources in Birmingham. Don now spends much of his time helping veterans less fortunate than himself.

As the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP/Membership Chair for the Greater Birmingham Chapter (MOAA), Don instituted an aggressive recruiting and retention program resulting in the Chapter being recognized as one of the top recruiting Chapters among the 400 MOAA Chapters nationwide. He developed a Facebook page, Chapter website, and heads our recruiting and information efforts at all community activities to inform and attract veterans to MOAA.

Don is a lifetime member of the Military Officers Association of America, the Marine Corps League, Krulak Marine Alliance, Vietnam Veterans and Disabled Veterans Associations, as well as a VA hospital volunteer, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing and American Legion member. Don has a special affinity for assisting the Home Depot Foundation for their veteran home renovations initiatives here in the Birmingham area. He works tirelessly on projects for all veteran and community organizations.

Don and his wife Patricia also enjoy visiting their combined six children and fifteen grandchildren located around the country and traveling the world.



(visit Legislative Action at <http://www.moaa.org>)

### **TRICARE Pharmacy Fees Set to Increase in 2020**

(By: Kathy Beasley)

MOAA makes it a priority to prepare our membership well ahead of changes that will impact their earned benefits. In that regard, please consider this an advance notice for your planning purposes.

The cost shares for your medications, if you do not receive them at a DoD military treatment facility, will increase on Jan. 1.

Recall back in the 2017 NDAA, TRICARE's pharmacy cost shares changed across all medication tiers, and a new fee table was introduced. Beneficiaries saw their prescription fees start to rise in 2018 and 2019. As we published at the time, these fees will accumulate and continue to rise annually until 2027.

According to a large percentage of respondents who have taken MOAA's health care surveys, many still recall the "sticker shock" they experienced when their mail order generic medication went from \$0 to \$7 – it was not so bad if you only had to take one, but most people take several so it added up very quickly.

These annual average increases continue to be substantial, especially if CPI remains tame and retired pay and social security incomes stay flat.

The bottom line is, TRICARE pharmacy fees and other provider visit cost-shares and premiums for both TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select, are starting to squeeze beneficiaries. MOAA continues to press the DoD to show the results of how much revenue is being generated from beneficiaries and where it is being directed. We maintain any savings should be re-invested into the TRICARE health program, not diverted into other un-specified accounts.

### **Summer Storm Recap: MOAA Members Send 15,500 Messages to Congress**

(By Dan Merry)

MOAA Members, and those you recruited to help, made a measurable difference in our advocacy efforts during our Summer Storm. We know the value of grassroots efforts, and regularly discuss the significance of such during our regional training sessions and chapter visits.

This more recent series of engagements started with a call to action from MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins on July 29.

In true *Never Stop Serving* fashion, many of you took the field, made some outs and hit some home runs. Here are some of the stats:

- You sent 6,360 messages to Congress on the widow's tax.
  - Current co-sponsorships: 377 in the House and 76 in the Senate
  - Senator Jones's Motion to Instruct the Senate Conferees was voted on by the Senate 94-0; while not a binding vote it does indicate a continuation of support.
- You sent 9,122 messages to Congress on the military medical billet reductions.
  - This too has gotten support from both the House and the Senate during your engagements, our visits on the Hill, and repeated discussions with their staffs.

Both provisions highlighted in our Summer Storm are now in conference where the House and Senate will determine the final defense bill. We have come a long way to get to this point but there are no guarantees as to the ultimate outcome – we cannot slow down.

Congress is currently on their district and state breaks through Oct. 14 – this is another opportunity to contact them at home if you can. We need everyone to keep the pressure on congress, thank them for their support, and encourage them to pass the defense bill supportive of these and other priorities.

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER CONTINUED

Veterans' Day is November 11<sup>th</sup>. It is also called Remembrance Day in Canada. I have a note that I often share with veterans who never saw combat, or who are somewhat embarrassed that they served only a year or two. This is what it says: "What is a Veteran? A "Veteran"- whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve, is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America", for an amount of "up to, and including his or her life." That is honor. And there are way too many people in this country today who no longer understand this fact."

This Veterans Day, May God bless you, your family, our servicemen and women and their families, our leaders, the President, and these United States of America.



SAVE THE DATE



★★★★★ **SAVE the DATE** ★★★★★

MAYOR ASHLEY CURRY AND  
THE CITY OF VESTAVIA HILLS  
ARE HONORED TO PRESENT A

*Veterans Day Celebration*

FEATURING PATRIOTIC-THEMED  
MUSICAL PERFORMANCES & SPEAKERS

Thursday, November 7, 2019

Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church  
2061 Kentucky Avenue  
Vestavia Hills, Alabama

(Continued from President's message)

November 10 – Veterans Day Ceremony,  
Alabama Veterans Memorial Park  
November 10 – National Veterans Day  
Dinner  
November 11 – National Veterans Day  
Parade  
December 12 – Chapter Christmas Party  
December 14 – Wreaths Around America

Emma Vaiton, one of our oldest Veterans  
with Wes and Cynthia Cox







## Armed Forces Spouse Club

November 13, 2019  
Inverness Country Club  
11:30 am  
For reservations  
Contact  
Jane Galik  
ladyg8r74@gmail.com  
205-664-8163

The purpose of this organization is to foster friendship among the spouses of active, retired alive and deceased military personnel of the Armed Forces.

Marilla McNair Chita Blakely, Erin Stone, and Sissie Jensen



Wes Cox, Erin Stone and Donna Martin



Marilyn Bassett and Pat Fiol



## Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA Ladies Luncheon

Surviving spouses, spouses of living members and female officers met for the Ladies Luncheon at Hoover Country Club on October 2. Donna Martin, Surviving Spouse Liaison to the GBC Board, welcomed everyone followed by an inspirational thought and prayer by LTC (Ret) Pat Fiol. COL (Ret) Deb Parker led the Pledge of Allegiance. COL (Ret) Wes Cox, GBC MOAA President, provided updates on legislative issues. The elimination of the SBP/DIC off set, known as the "Widows' Tax" has progressed further in the legislative process than previous years. MOAA is cautiously optimistic at this point. Patricia Anderson, Survivor Outreach Services explained the services she provides. One of the key services is assisting a new surviving spouse to complete all the paperwork needed at the difficult time. Anne Hartline, MOAA National Surviving Spouse Committee, provided an update on her training for regional MOAA SS Liaisons in Hershey, PA. Erin Stone, JAGC, USN (Ret) provided an informative presentation relating legal issues. Some topics discussed were benefits status on remarriage and resources for locating an attorney. Appreciation was expressed to Margie Argo for decorations, Lisa Phillips for Mary Kay favors, Hoffman Media for magazines. The GBC MOAA Ladies Committee members who planned this event are Donna Martin, Anne Hartline, Margie Argo, Jerri Barnhill, Cynthia Cox, Linda DeMarco, Marilyn Bassett and Pat Marvin. Guests from Gadsden were Sissie Jensen, wife of the President of MOAA Alabama Council of Chapters, Mariella McNair, Surviving Spouse Liaison for the MOAA Coosa Valley Chapter in Gadsden, and Chita Blakeley.



## GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

## RECRUITER'S CORNER

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mike Robinson	2	
Isiah Martin	8	
Martha Killian	10	
Mark		
Melanson	10	
Monica		
Deason	12	
Anne Hartline	14	
Russ Frazer	14	
Bill Aderholt	16	Turns 90
Patricia		
Lehman	20	
Rudolph		
Morgan	22	
Bob Shinpaugh	26	
Charles Marvin	28	
Ginny Lusk	29	
Bonnie Brewer	29	
Pat Fiol	30	

### Greater Birmingham MOAA Coins

The new Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA Challenge Coins are now available to order for only \$10 per coin! This coin will make a wonderful gift and must-have for any challenge coin collection. You can also order coins by contacting:

LTC (ret) Don Lehman at  
[don.lehman1@gmail.com](mailto:don.lehman1@gmail.com).

Display cases are available for \$1 each, and orders to be mailed should add \$1 per coin.

### New members:

Please welcome the new members who signed up during this past month! All but Albert (Rip) were present to accept their chapter challenge coins at the October meeting.

**Robert (Shawn) Davidson, LTC USA (retired)**

**James Edwards, Maj Army NG**

**Robert Gant, N/A**

**James Hernandez, LTC Army NG**

**Richard McKinley, Capt USAF (retired)**

**Albert (Rip) VanWinkle, LTC USA (retired)**

### Chapter dues renewals:

Chapter dues reminders will be emailed/sent out in November to those members needing renewal; we are on a calendar year for our chapter dues (\$20 one year, \$35 two years and \$50 for three years). Good news is, you can now renew online with a credit/debit card, on the National MOAA website; the link will be provided with your due's reminder.

### Website

Changes have been made to our website. Be sure to check it out and let us know what you think.

[www.MOABirmingham.org](http://www.MOABirmingham.org)

Semper Fi,

Don Lehman, LTC, USMCR (retired)

Membership Chair

### **Personalized MOAA Nametags**

MOAA nametags with white lettering on white, approximately the size of a business card with magnetic backs are available for \$8.50 each through J.D. Crawford.

Mail your name, rank and branch of service (or other information as applicable, i.e. surviving spouse, etc.) along with \$8.50 for each nametag ordered to James D. Crawford, 3076 Brookhill Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242.

Make checks payable to James D. Crawford.







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**HOMEWOOD**

Lt. Col. (Ret) Mac Chandler, Family Service Counselor

205-879-3401 [RidoutsValleyChapel.com](http://RidoutsValleyChapel.com)



## Donald Lehman

LtCol USMCR (retired)



### Consulting Petroleum Geologist

AAPG CPG #4560

*Lifetime memberships:*

[MOAABirmingham.org](http://MOAABirmingham.org)

[AlabamaMarine.org](http://AlabamaMarine.org)

[VVA.org](http://VVA.org) - [DAV.org](http://DAV.org)

Cell: (404) 441-3882  
[don.lehman1@gmail.com](mailto:don.lehman1@gmail.com)



Still serving veterans – Once a Marine always a Marine



Our upcoming dinner meetings will be 07 November 2019 at 6:00 pm and 05 December 2019