



Greetings Greater Birmingham Chapter (MOAA)
Members and Friends,

The coronavirus pandemic continues to determine how, in most cases, we choose to live our daily lives. As States “open up” more venues it is important to remember that the coronavirus is still among us, and I encourage everyone to continue practicing the guidelines that have been put out by Alabama and Federal health professionals – maintain a safe distance, wash your hands often, and wear a mask when in public.

At this point I am not sure when we will be able to gather for our next monthly meeting. I am not confident that Danberry will be ready to reopen to the community for our June meeting. Our first concern is your health so we will keep this foremost in our minds as we plan when and where to meet in the future.

During the May meeting we planned to recognize the Ladies of the Chapter. This will be our first agenda item when we restart the meetings. Our MOAA Ladies continue to be active and steadfast supporters of the Chapter and we will thank them for their many, many contributions when we meet again!

In June, the Board members will conduct a “Buddy Check” of all our members. This is simply a method to stay in touch with all chapter members as we continue to live with the pandemic restrictions. We look forward to talking with everyone.

Continued page3

Officers' Call

Greater Birmingham Chapter Military Officers Association of America

President Wes Cox, Col, USA (Ret)

1st VP Don Lehman, LTC, USMC (Ret)

2nd VP Michael Walker, LTC, USA (Ret)

Secretary Robert Williams, Maj, USA (Ret)

Treasurer Doug Markam, CPT, USN (Ret)

Past Pres. Mark Rubino, LT, USN

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

Director Mark Melanson, Col USA (Ret)

Director Vacant

Chaplain Mac Chandler, LTC, USA (Ret)

TOPS Liaison Vacant

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.

NO MEETING IN JUNE

***Due to the coronavirus, the April newsletter was not published, and the May newsletter was abbreviated**

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



President's Message (continued)

Even though we cannot meet we can still support MOAAs legislative actions via letters, emails, and phone calls. Remember our Chapter mission is to, "benefit the members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate for a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members." Please stay active in your support.

Cynthia and I wish you all a wonderful summer. Have fun, be safe and remember to -- wash often, maintain social distance, and wear a mask!

Respectfully,

Wes

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As summer begins, we are still in the middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and as of May 15th, 11,100 cases of Covid-19 have been reported in the state of Alabama with 473 deaths. I believe our Governor has done a good job at managing our state during this pandemic, and she needs to remain in your prayers, as does the President of the United States. Both individuals are doing their best to walk the very fine line of keeping us safe, while at the same time reopening the economy. All of us must do our part to mitigate the spread of this virus, especially since 81 % of the deaths in our state are folks 65 years of age and older!"

I also want to share some verses that I believe are helpful currently: Psalm 46:1-3. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Also, I would like to add verse 10: Be still and know that I am God! This month I would like to again end with some more verses from Psalm 91:9-11: Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

We as individuals, as a community, as citizens of the state of Alabama, and as citizens of the United States of America need to stay in prayer and use common sense. Pray for your neighbors. Pray for your family. Pray for the medical folks who are dealing with this non-stop. Pray for the first responders. Pray for our community, state, and country. Have FAITH, not FEAR. Proverbs 3:5-6 says Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Great guidance for our current times!!!

God Bless. See you all when this is over.

Mac Chandler

LTC, IN, US Army (Ret)

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

Virtual Storming the Hill 2020

As a reminder, last month I detailed the two major issues that MOAA and State Council representatives would discuss with Legislators during the virtual Storming of the Hill in May 2020. Those issues were:

- Control Copays to Protect the Military Health Care Benefits, and
- Military Pay and Service – Earned Benefits: Key to Recruiting and Retaining a Ready and Capable All-Volunteer Force

If you have not had the opportunity to show your support for these issues there is still time. Write, call, or email our Alabama Senators and Representatives today.

Key Bills supported by MOAA

Below is a list and short description of the Key Bills that have been introduced and are being supported by MOAA. Complete details of the Bills can be found in the Advocacy section of the MOAA website – www.moaa.org.

Federal – HR 5995 and S 3393 – A bill to amend title 10, USC, to expand eligibility to certain military retirees for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation.

Federal – HR 413 – A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the work opportunity credit to small businesses, which hire individuals who are members of the Ready Reserve or National Guard.

Federal- HR 8457 – A bill to provide interim appropriations for the Coast Guard Retired Servicemans's Family Protection and Survivor Benefits Plans for each FY after FY 2018.

Federal – S 21 – A bill providing continuing appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event of an appropriations act expired prior to the enactment of new appropriations.



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Congratulations to our newest MOAA Life member, Col Carl Cooper, USMC, retired!

Yes, if you too reach 100 years old, you will get a free complimentary MOAA lifetime membership. We hope to present to the colonel soon, the signed certificate by National MOAA president Lt Gen Dana T. Atkins, challenge coin and birthday card that they also provided.

The below article is re-printed from the Over the Mountain Journal, dated March 25, 2020

Vestavia Hills War Hero Celebrates 100th Birthday with VA Medical Center Staff



Birmingham VA employees previously celebrated Col. Carl Cooper on Nov. 20. Photos courtesy Birmingham VA.

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Carl Cooper of Vestavia Hills joined the centenarian club on March 18, celebrating his 100th birthday with a virtual celebration with staff at the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Health Care System. Our leadership team was honored to recognize Col. Cooper today for his many years of military service and to celebrate his 100th birthday with him via FaceTime,” said Stacy Vasquez, director of the Birmingham VA.

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Carl Cooper celebrated his 100th birthday on March 18. Journal file photo. Cooper, who served in the World War II, Korean and Vietnam wars, has been receiving health services from the VA since 1980. He credits the Birmingham VA with keeping him healthy.

“The Lord has been good to me and continues to bless me every day,” he shared.

The 100-year old Clanton native, joined the Marines on April 1, 1942 and became a member of 6th Marine Division. By 1945, he was a 1st Lieutenant stationed in Okinawa at both Mount Yae-Take and Sugar Loaf.

For his service, he has been awarded two dozen medals including a Presidential Unit Citation with One Star, Marine Corps Medal with Four Stars, the United Nations Medal, and the coveted Legion of Merit Medal.

“I was only doing what my country needed me to do and I came home,” said Col. Cooper. Cooper received a bachelor’s degree from Samford University, then Howard College, as well as master’s from Vanderbilt University and a doctorate from Alabama universities.

When he was not serving overseas, Cooper served his community as a schoolteacher. Following the Korean War, he served as the first principal of Mountain Brook Junior High School for eight years until he was called to serve in the Vietnam War. After retiring from his 38-year service in the Marine Corps, he began working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency until he was 90 years old.

Col. Cooper remains an active member of his church, arriving every Thursday morning at 6 a.m. to stuff inserts into 3,000 Sunday bulletins.



Armed Forces Spouse Club WILL NOT MEET UNTIL SEPTEMBER

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. In lieu of having many speakers this year, we have chosen locations for comradery-won't you please join us!!!

TAPS ORGANIZATION

TAPS was introduced last month in the MOAA GBC newsletter. This month additional information is being provided about the various support and resources available to survivors through TAPS.

Just a recap: TAPS provides comfort, care, and resources to all those grieving the death of a military loved one

EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES: If one of your goals includes pursuing education, our Education Support Coordinators are here to serve as a guide to federal, state, and private education benefit and scholarship information and resources. You can access the [TAPS Scholarship Search Tool](#), as well as request [education support](#) by emailing education@taps.org, calling our 24/7 Helpline at 800-959-8277 or asking the Survivor Care Team advocate who is reaching out to you to submit a request on your behalf.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES & GRIEF

COUNSELING: TAPS facilitates connecting survivors to clinical [grief counseling](#) through nationwide networks, such as Give an Hour and Vet Centers. Connecting with professionals in your local area, such as physicians, may be helpful in your healing and offer additional information regarding local grief support. Survivors find support in a variety of ways such as, hospice support groups, support through religious communities, and alternative methods for healing, like yoga or acupuncture. We believe that surrounding yourself with a variety of supports both within TAPS and without is important for your journey. Please consider utilizing these supports. You can easily request counseling connections through the Survivor Care Team advocate who is reaching out to you or you can call our Helpline at 800-959-8277.

TAPS SUPPORT FOR YOUNG SURVIVORS: At many TAPS events, our young survivors can meet other children with shared experiences and feel the comfort of knowing they are not alone. TAPS Good Grief Camps and Campouts provide a safe and supportive environment for sharing and connecting with peers and military mentors, as children participate in activities and learn coping strategies. To learn more about TAPS events for young survivors, please visit <https://www.taps.org/youthprograms>

TAPS ONLINE COMMUNITY: Our Online Community provides opportunities to connect with other TAPS survivors through [blogs](#), chats, message boards, and peer groups. The TAPS website is the portal for access to these secure online forums and blogs written by fellow survivors. You can visit our [Online Community](#) to sign up and connect with your peers online. You may also visit our [TAPS Magazine](#) to access current and past issues full of articles which address a wide variety of topics related to grief and coping with life after loss.

NATIONAL & REGIONAL SURVIVOR SEMINARS,

RETREATS, & EXPEDITIONS: During all our events, you will share time face-to-face with other survivors in a comforting and safe environment, while learning coping skills and forming a lasting support network among peers. [TAPS Seminars](#) are held in various locations annually across the nation and provide opportunities for survivors in all walks of their grief journey to come together for healing workshops and small group sessions. Seminars are always held in conjunction with our Good Grief Camp. [TAPS Retreats](#) are especially designed for survivors whose loss occurred more than one year ago and include physical and emotional movement, time for conversation and reflection, and unique travel experiences. [TAPS Expeditions](#) are longer, outdoor skills-based events



GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Sandy Vitalis	2
JD Crawford	6
Helen Green	8
Pat Singletary	10
George Lord	11
Sam Faires	12
David Hicks	15
Harb Moore	19
Bud Jensen	22
GT Merriam	26
Tim McGraw	29

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

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.



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RIDOUT'S VALLEY CHAPEL

HOMEWOOD

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

205-879-3401 RidoutsValleyChapel.com

Donald Lehman

LtCol USMCR (retired)



Consulting Petroleum Geologist

AAPG CPG #4560

Lifetime memberships:

MOAABirmingham.org

AlabamaMarine.org

VVA.org - DAV.org

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No meeting in June