



Greetings Greater Birmingham Chapter (MOAA) Members and Friends,

Well, it is July and most of us are making plans to celebrate our Country's Independence with families and friends... as the corona virus pandemic continues to linger! Even though Alabama and most states have loosened restrictions many of this year's July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations will be modified to support current restrictions of social distancing, wearing masks in public, and limiting the number of people allowed into a celebration area. I would encourage you all to continue to consider the coronavirus a serious health concern and do what is right to protect yourselves and those around you.

**We will not meet in July.** Danberry is continuing their aggressive campaign to protect the health of residents and will not open for community events in July. Anticipating that the current situation will continue for at least the next couple of months the Board is considering other methods to meet. We are exploring a virtual meeting using Zoom Meeting. Zoom is a simple audio/video program, which would allow us to pass information and present a program to you in the comfort of your home. 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.

I would like to inform you of some of the actions taken by the Board and members of the Chapter in the past couple of months:

- During June the Board members conducted a **"Buddy Check"** of all our members. If you were not contacted please contact Donna Martin, 205-408-4761 or email [donnamaemartin@aol.com](mailto:donnamaemartin@aol.com), to ensure your contact information is correct in the Chapter database.

- **MOAA COVID-19 Relief Grants** - The COVID-19 relief fund grant is for qualifying individuals who have suffered from economic impact. Grants of up to \$500 to assist with household expenses were available. MOAA National asked councils and chapters to help identify active duty, veterans, and caregivers who may be eligible and in need. Our Chapter submitted one needy veteran and MOAA turned around the approval for a \$500 grant in 24 hours.

(Continued page 3)

# Officers' Call

## Greater Birmingham Chapter Military Officers Association of America

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

*1<sup>st</sup> VP* Don Lehman, LTC, USMC (Ret)

*2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:newsletter@moaabirmingham.org).

# NO MEETING IN JULY

**\*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)

- Our Chapter recruiting program was recognized by a MOAA **"One-time \$50 National MOAA Recruiting bonus"** under the 2020 Chapter Recruitment Program.
- The Chapter made a \$700 donation to the MOAA Foundation in the name of LTC Tom Ruffing, USA (Ret) who passed away recently.

Please continue to 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 happy, fun, and safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July. And, continue to -- wash your hands often, maintain social distance, and wear a mask!

Respectfully,  
Wes

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

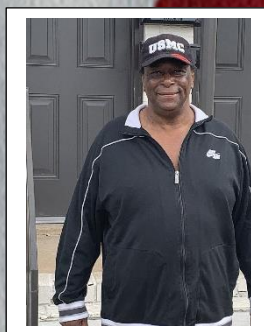
Well, here we are going into July and we still have to deal with this pandemic. All our lives are impacted by this outbreak. I pray that everyone reading this note is doing well, staying socially distanced, wears a mask when shopping, and are washing your hands often. Who would have thought one year ago that we would be heading into a summer without baseball, that most July 4<sup>th</sup> events would be cancelled, and that our country would be reeling from hate and distrust the likes of which we have never seen.

As I reflect on the events of the last six months, I have prayed more fervently. I have tried to be more patient. I have looked at others differently. Our pastor gave a nine-week long message about the fruit of the spirit; this is in Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 5, verses 22-23. But what I'd like to mention are the verses that precede this, verses 19-21. These verses show me that things have not really changed in human nature since Paul's time. He writes that the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. Does this sound familiar?

He also writes that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against such things there is no law. Therefore, my friends, this July, as we celebrate our country's birthday, I pray that while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people. Let us strive to live by the fruit of the spirit. Let us be beacons of hope in our community.

May God bless the members of the Greater Birmingham Chapter of MOAA, the state of Alabama, the President of the United States, and may He continue to bless our country.

Mac Chandler  
LTC, IN, US Army (Ret)



### MOAA Foundation COVID-19 grants

Does anyone recognize Percy Lawson? Maybe you have seen him working the information/help desk at the VA Clinic. He volunteers over 1,000 hours per year at the VA, plus was a part-time employee until COVID-19 hit in March. Being laid off and suffering financial hardship, the MOAA Foundation has seen fit to award Percy a \$500 grant, sponsored by the GBC MOAA. Another example of your chapter helping veterans in need!

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

### PREVENTS Initiative (President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide)

President Donald Trump is unveiling a long-awaited national plan to stem a persistently high number of veteran suicides, with wide-ranging initiatives from firearm safety and wellness programs at workplaces to added barriers near railroads and bridges.

The \$53 million, two-year effort will include a public messaging campaign starting in the coming weeks to raise awareness about suicide at a time of increased social distancing and isolation during a pandemic.

The broad road map also urges outreach by awarding grants to community programs outside the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The centerpiece of immediate efforts is a broad public awareness campaign that will be akin in scope to those against drunken driving, focused on dispelling myths such as that it is dangerous to talk openly about issues of mental health and suicide.

The plan urges increased education on gun safety and counseling and limiting access to prescription drugs if a veteran is seen at a higher risk of mental distress.

It also set a goal of getting employers representing 25% of the national workforce to commit to prioritizing mental health and wellness programs in the workplace.

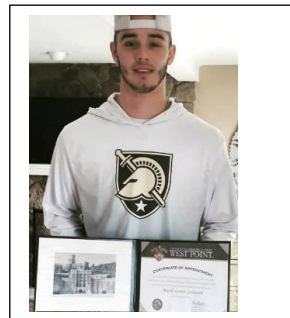
Longer term, the task force also proposed broader safety measures to deter acts of suicide. The road map proposes that parking garages, bridges, railroads and other high-risk areas could be fitted with jump barriers, crisis call boxes, and suicide prevention signage.

According to the White House, the new task force hopes to create a grant system similar to the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing program, which provides funding to state and local programs.

The effort, which is being dubbed the PREVENTS Initiative, will also aim to better coordinate research on suicide prevention across agencies, including Veterans Affairs, Defense and Homeland Security. PREVENTS stands for -- President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide.

### **Congrats to Cadet Mark Lehman!**

Class of 2024, US Military Academy, West Point. Much better looking than his Granddad. Who knows, maybe he will even take a USMC commission (the Marine Captain that commissioned me in 1969 was a West Point grad!). Don Lehman, LTC, USMCR (Ret)





**Chapter Membership Report**

It sure is great to have the much-celebrated 100-year-old USMC Col Cooper showing on the member roster last week and many thanks to Lt Col Lehman in coordinating for this national MOAA recognition for our chapter.

The Greater Birmingham Chapter of MOAA membership is now 170 and we are always looking for more members. People may not be aware of MOAA at all, and some may not be aware they are eligible to join MOAA until someone tells them. If you know of anyone who would be a good GBC MOAA member, you can write them, call, or direct potential members to the following signup portal at <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx> and have them select the "Join" option.

For new members to join via snail mail, the below form should be filled out and mailed to the following chapter address:

Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA  
P.O. Box 530153  
Birmingham, Alabama 35253

Thank you to those who have shown their continued support.

**Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA Eligibility:**

Anyone anywhere can join our chapter anytime, so long as they meet MOAA chapter eligibility requirements. The ordinary chapter area consists of Blount, Chilton, Coosa, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker counties. To be clear, all Warrant, Chief Warrant, or commissioned officers of the armed forces (Regular, Reserve, National Guard, Retired) as well as USCG, NOAA, and USPHS commissioned officers can join GBC MOAA.

If you know of someone who is eligible to join, I am asking for your help in reaching out to them. We do have members outside of the ordinary chapter area who like belonging to GBC MOAA. Please use the below form to have applicants fill out.

Remember to bookmark and check the GBC MOAA website at <http://moaabirmingham.org> to see the latest updates.

The GBC MOAA Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Greater-Birmingham-MOAA-Chapter-161367134657315/>

Michael A. Walker  
LTC(Ret), USA  
Membership Chair

## **Col Carl Cooper, USMC retired. National MOAA recognition & drive-by celebration, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Several of us were able to present a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday card, honorary MOAA Lifetime membership, challenge coins and have a fun drive-by celebration for Col Carl Cooper. Thanks to our president Wes Cox, membership chair Michael Walker, JD Crawford (check out the video of his red caddillac leading the charge on our website Photo Gallery) and Donna Martin above.



**Wes Cox presenting to Col Cooper**



**Donna Martin speeding past Col Cooper on drive-by**

Semper Fi, Don Lehman





## Armed Forces Spouse Club WILL NOT MEET UNTIL SEPTEMBER

For reservations

Contact

Jane Galik

[ladyg8r74@gmail.com](mailto: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!!!

### Navigating the Challenges of COVID-19

By [Anne Hartline](#), Chair, *Surviving Spouse Advisory Council*

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," wrote Charles Dickens to begin his novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. This quote describes the current feelings of SSAC members, who represent a cross section of surviving spouses. Here is how they are navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic:

MOAA board member [Gail Joyce](#) has enjoyed being at home in her new house in Granbury, Texas. She has found yardwork and sitting on her patio watching the birds therapeutic. Her neighbors visit in the street while maintaining social distancing guidelines, and she and her daughter who lives close by share meals. Her church has a drive-in service on Sunday. She misses hugs.

SSAC member [Pat Farnsworth](#) is confined to her apartment in Patriots Colony Retirement Community in Williamsburg, Va. The biggest downer for her is no visitors are allowed on the property. Pat has Facetime calls with her children and grandchildren, and numerous telephone calls from friends throughout the country. All activities have been canceled, and meals are delivered to her apartment. Happily, the widows are offering to help each other if they need assistance with anything, such as laundry. She is disappointed her MOAA chapter luncheons have been canceled for April and May, and the Virginia Council of Chapters has canceled the annual congressional luncheon. She believes that when this ends, we will all be more appreciative of what we have. "Until then, it is chin up, chest out, and carry on."

[Micki Costello](#), SSAC member from Fredericksburg, Va., is coping with "9-11 on steroids" by trying not to dwell on the negative aspects of social distancing. She is attempting to maintain her normal routine of getting up at the same time

making her bed, showering, applying makeup, and getting dressed. She begins her day by attending the mass that the priests at her church stream live. Micki appreciates having time to paint, and she has a virtual lesson each Thursday morning with a teacher in California. She has lived alone in her house for 10 years, and her neighbors frequently go out on their porches in the evening to "see" each other. She has Facetime calls with her son and his family who are stationed in Asia and talks with her daughter and her family who live about 60 miles away. She also is making an effort to call friends. She wants to take advantage of this difficult time to refocus on those things in life that are really important, and she is heartened by the random acts of kindness that Americans are doing every day.

SSAC Member [Nancy Mullen](#) from Tennessee is working from home and keeping busy with trainings, webinars, and clients. She is thankful her company has committed to zero layoffs during this time. To keep from going stir crazy, she takes breaks to go outside with her pups, exercises, or sits in the sun for a bit. She is trying to stay away from snacking because she is bored. Her pups are thrilled with extra attention and treats. Nancy believes we all need to take care of ourselves. We can reach out to friends and family, enjoy the simple life, and try not to dwell on the negative. We need to do what we can do and not stress out about what we cannot control.

SSAC member [Capt. Kathy Thorp, USN \(Ret\)](#), who lives in Maryland, is currently in Seattle taking care of her daughter's 4-year-old twins. Her daughter, who is a major in the Army, has been studying for her recent exams for graduation from the Uniformed Services University with her PHD/NP. There are some unknowns about where she will work now and day care for the children. She believes the timing of being there is surely a fate from above. More joy came recently when her daughter's boyfriend called Kathy (continued page 11)

## GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mac Chandler	1
Shawn Davidson	10
Don Lehman	10
Mary Jensen	12
Joe Sarver	14
James Oliver	15
Ann Munson	16
Dale Murray	16
Jerri Barnhill	23
Ed Rowe	25
AL Goodwin	27
Donna Martin	29

### Navigating the Challenges of COVID-19 continued Anne Hartline

For me, Anne Hartline, the current challenge is navigating a new normal for staying at home in Alabama. My children and young neighbors have been grocery shopping for me, so I have only been out to take tax documents to my accountant. Planning meals, cooking, and freezing have become a challenge. I have lived alone in my house since my husband died eight years ago. I have coped by being very active and not being at home very much. I often have said I was not home long enough to clean out my house to prepare for downsizing. Well, I have been organizing and tossing. Leisurely telephone calls with family and friends have been blessings. Also, this has been a time of reflection on what normal will look like after the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to MOAA board chaplain Bob Certain's morning and evening prayers on Facebook, and my church has had numerous live-streaming services. The world has changed. We must reimagine ourselves in this new reality. I believe hope and resilience will enable us to never stop serving.

Website



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

### 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.

### 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.





WILLIAM C. McDONALD III

*Shadow Tiger Press*

billy@shadowtiger.org

1401 Blenheim Place  
Birmingham AL 35213

(205) 790-7575

# *the Shadow Tiger*

Billy McDonald

Wingman to  
Chennault

WILLIAM C. McDONALD III  
BARBARA L. EVENSON

RLC  
RESORT LIFESTYLE  
COMMUNITIES

*Cahaba Ridge*

## Affordable Resort-Style Living Made Simple.

Cahaba Ridge is Vestavia Hills' magnificent, all-inclusive independent living community. We take care of everything with one monthly price and no buy-in fee so you can enjoy the good things in life.



### One monthly price includes:

- Month-to-month lease with no buy-in fees
- Live-in managers
- Signature *Freedom Dining* program
- Social activities & wellness programs
- 24/7 Fitness center
- 24/7 Medical Alert System
- Room service and chef's pantry
- Weekly housekeeping
- Concierge & Valet Parking Services

Call to schedule a private tour and discover the benefits of resort-style living today!

205-259-7758



3090 Healthy Way ♦ Vestavia Hills, AL 35243 ♦ [CahabaRidgeRetirement.com](http://CahabaRidgeRetirement.com)







YOU HONORED US WITH YOUR SERVICE.

*Now let us honor you.*

**WE ARE PROUD TO SERVE VETERANS** more than any other provider. In fact, we're part of the Dignity Memorial® network, the largest network of funeral homes and cemeteries in North America.

As a member of the Dignity Memorial network, we know more about obtaining everything that is owed to you, including monetary burial benefits, a

government-issued marker, presidential certificate and much more. We are also able to offer a FREE Veterans Planning Guide that includes worksheets and valuable information.

Regardless of whether you choose to be buried in a national or private cemetery, we can help you receive everything you have earned.

*We invite you to call us for more information.*



**RIDOUT'S VALLEY CHAPEL**

**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



### Navigating the Challenges of COVID-19 continued

and asked to marry her daughter. Kathy believes coping involves treasuring time together, leaning on one's faith, and praying for all who are ill and working in this environment. Lastly, she believes that much like the time when her husband passed, the gloomy, stormy times eventually will pass, and then special graces will be felt.

[Barbara Smith](#), SSAC member who lives in Virginia Beach, Va., used to think if only she had a few days to stay home, she could accomplish so much. She has painted and cleaned out closets and has stacks of stuff ready for a yard sale. Her daughter and son-in-law have been living with her for the past year and a half, which has been a blessing especially at this time. They do grocery shopping, cooking, and yardwork. They found out recently their first grandchild, a girl, will be born in November. This will be Barbara's 16th great-grandchild, and it's exciting for her to have this to look forward to. She is trying to stay in touch with the 52 surviving spouses in her chapter. Fortunately, most have family in the area.

Georgie Suitor, SSAC virtual member who lives in California, takes long walks each morning and afternoon with Tye and Sadie, her two Shih Tzu rescues. She gets errands done within current California rules that allow leaving home for essentials. Her community singing group has canceled all gigs, but they are continuing to practice by remote connecting so that they can "keep in tune" until they can practice in person again. Early on, she had to cancel a major fundraiser for a nonprofit organization that she serves as president. There were many online meetings to decide to postpone the event until spring 2021. Georgie believes we will get through this time "learning how good it feels to keep intentionally in touch with compassion, concern, and a bit of humor."

Cindy Bondi, SSAC virtual member from Iowa, feels like she has been preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing since her husband was diagnosed with stage-4 pancreatic cancer four years ago. She began then to prepare to be alone and self-sufficient and to think about what she needed to do to be safe and secure in the future. She began to wrap her head around the reality that her married children do not live nearby. She grew to appreciate that she had gotten to know most of her neighbors who have offered help and friendship through her loss. Now she really feels alone. When this is over, the world will go back to normal and, for her, the loneliness will continue. Recently, she has begun to play her violin again.

(Continued page 8)





No meeting in July