



Greetings Greater Birmingham Chapter (MOAA) Members and Friends,

Well, the coronavirus pandemic continues to be a major health concern as schools prepare for the 2020 – 2021 school year, and all of Alabama awaits the final decision to play or not play high school and college football. During times like these I am “almost” glad to be retired and not have to grapple with hard decisions that have major impacts on large groups of people. I encourage everyone to be a leader in fighting the coronavirus and do what is right to protect yourselves and those around you.

Our September meeting will be conducted using a virtual platform -- Zoom. The Board has used Zoom to conduct the last two Board Meetings. Access is easy and it was an effective method to meet, discuss issues, and make decisions without meeting in person or battling the traffic on Hwy 280. **Our speaker will be ADM (Ret) Kent Davis, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs.** Each member will be emailed instructions on how to join the Zoom meeting. **The meeting will be held on September 3rd beginning a 3:00pm.** I look forward to meeting with you and your spouse once again, even if it is in a virtual format.

I wrote last month that our Chapter was selected for the 5-Star Communications Awards for both our Newsletter and Website. This month it is a privilege to inform you that our Chapter was recognized with the **5-Star Level of Excellence (LOE) Award for 2020.** The LOE Award is based on the Chapters legislative advocacy, community engagement, recruiting and retention, leadership and personal affairs programs, and other objective criteria. 5-Star is the highest level of recognition. I would like to thank everyone for your participation and commitment to helping MOAA achieve our objectives to protect earned benefits.

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.

ZOOM MEETING IN SEPTEMBER INSTRUCTIONS TO FOLLOW

***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)

This year's National Veterans Day parade and dinner have also been cancelled. The National Veterans Day Committee will produce a virtual parade that will highlight the active duty and veteran organizations in this area. We have been asked to participate in this event.

MOAA National recently announced "Summer Storming 2020," which focuses on critical decisions for the Military Health Care system. MOAA is asking us to support Sections 715 and 716 of the House passed defense bill concerning (1), DoD's military treatment facilities restructuring and (2), DoD medical billet reductions. MOAA's website (www.moaa.org) has easy to use tools to contact our congressional representatives. Please stay active in your support.

Please continue to -- wash your hands often, maintain social distance, and wear a mask!

Respectfully,

Wes

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As I write this, we are still in the grasp of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and almost 116,00 cases of Covid-19 have been reported in the state of Alabama with over 2,000 deaths. What touches me most through all of this is not all the sickness and the deaths, but the pure downright FEAR that appears to be gripping everyone. In April, our pastor, being pro-active, cancelled all church activities until further notice. Well, we just were notified that we will be able to start attending services again this month...socially distanced, of course. I am not so sure that I like this "new normal," but we all have to do our part to stop the spread of this virus, especially since we are all "older adults!" This past April, when we all started getting serious about the pandemic, I wrote about Romans 8:28, which says, "We know that God works ALL THINGS together for good for the ones who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose." One thing I really believe is that this pandemic has brought many of us to our knees in worship.

September usually brings us Labor Day family gatherings, and outings to the lakes and beaches, celebrating the end of summer. This year, please be safe when you gather! If you have college age children, please tell them to be wise with their decisions to go partying. With tailgating curtailed for the year, football season will really be different! I just hope and pray that we will get through the entire month Covid-free.

I was reading my Bible the other night and came across a note that I had written in the margin next to Psalm 118. Verse 8 states, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans." Let that sink in a bit. Looking at the evening news, I am reminded of this verse several times a day. It IS better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans.

Friends, please continue to pray for our community, state, and country. Have FAITH, not FEAR. Keep WASHING YOUR HANDS and keep Social Distancing. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. God Bless. See you all when this is over.

Mac Chandler
LTC, IN, US Army (Ret)

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

This article by Lt. Gen. Atkins USAF (Ret), MOAA President and CEO outlines the issues that we are asked to address for “Summer Storm 2020.” Full text is on the MOAA website at www.moaa.org.

Congress: Support Critical House NDAA Language Protecting Access to Medical Care for Military Beneficiaries

Background

DoD plans for military treatment facility (MTF) restructuring and medical billet reductions will move hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries out of military hospitals and clinics and into civilian hospitals and medical practices in surrounding communities. DoD recently announced a pause to these efforts, but a delay is not enough to address MOAA’s concerns about beneficiary access to care.

Recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report findings, combined with volatility in the civilian health care market caused by COVID-19, necessitate a halt to planned cuts and highlight the need for additional DoD reporting requirements and congressional oversight. We urge you to support Sections 715 and 716 of the House version of the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to ensure DoD conducts a more accurate and complete evaluation of civilian care availability. Military beneficiaries must not be moved out of MTFs if there is insufficient high-quality health care in surrounding communities.

GAO Reports Military Family Access to Health Care at Risk with MTF Restructuring Plan

The May 2020 GAO report, Defense Health Care: Additional Information and Monitoring Needed to Better Position DoD for Restructuring Medical Treatment Facilities, highlights shortfalls in DoD’s plan to restructure the direct care system of military hospitals and clinics – shortfalls that put access to care for military families at risk:

- DoD’s analysis failed to adequately evaluate availability of high-quality civilian medical care in communities surrounding restructured MTFs. The analysis did not verify the accuracy of the TRICARE provider directory, examine quality of providers, or determine whether providers were accepting new patients.
- DoD’s plan for restructuring MTFs does not evaluate the impact on primary care graduate medical education (GME) programs and non-GME training. Training programs conducted within MTFs are critical to the uniformed provider pipeline. GME cuts could negatively impact not only readiness but also beneficiary access to care.
- DoD says it will reverse or slow an MTF transition, if needed, to address any challenges that arise with patients’ ability to access health care. However, DoD’s plan does not discuss what conditions would warrant these moves, or how the need for such adjustments would be determined.

Staying Strong to Combat a Crisis

Proposed cuts to military medicine also must be re-evaluated in light of lessons learned from the whole-of-nation response to COVID-19, which may take months or years to fully assess. We must ensure our military medical system can work in support of national surge capacity to fulfill the crisis response mission without compromising beneficiary access to essential medical care. This pandemic demands an updated analysis of medical readiness requirements and optimal direct care system capacity. House Section 715 ensures medical manpower requirements account for all national defense strategy scenarios, including “both the homeland defense mission and pandemic influenza.”

A Delay Is Not Enough

While DoD has announced a delay to MTF restructuring and medical billet reductions, simply pausing these efforts is not enough. Cuts to military medicine cannot be reversed easily – they should be undertaken only after rigorous analysis of civilian care availability and medical manpower requirements. Sections 715 and 716 of the House NDAA are essential to ensure DoD conducts a thorough analysis of civilian health care quality and capacity, as well as an updated evaluation of medical manpower requirements. These provisions also provide much needed transparency and increased congressional oversight in the MTF restructuring and medical billet cut process.

48 FACILITIES TO FACE CUTS

Military treatment facilities serving Maxwell AFB and Redstone Arsenal will close or downsize under DoD plans, or already have closed/ downsized and will not be restored.

Chapter Membership Report

Chapter Membership Report

Starting September 22nd, GBC MOAA begins its fall membership renewal drive. **The goal is 100% renewal of current members.** You can mail payment to the physical address, or conveniently renew online at <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx>

GBC grew to 172 members since last month. Having more chapter members adds strength to our voice in legislative concerns affecting veterans, retirees, widows and their families. As a part of membership efforts, referrals by existing members continues to be a valuable resource and it is always a great day to mention the Birmingham chapter to any eligible persons. Former Chief/Warrants or Officers simply may not be aware of MOAA's existence or may not be aware they are eligible to join until someone tells them.

For new member referrals, mail the form on the next page to the following chapter address:

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

Dues Options

Until it changes, 1-Year dues are still \$20 (2 Years = \$35). The 3-Year chapter renewal option is the best bargain at \$50. In addition to existing members renewing, first time prospects can also join GBC MOAA online. It is always a good time to consider upgrading to Premium or even Life membership.

Thank you to those who have shown continuous support.

Eligibility:

Although we do, we do have members outside of the ordinary chapter area who like belonging to GBC MOAA, the ordinary GBC chapter area is Blount, Chilton, Coosa, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker counties. Warrants, Chief Warrants, or commissioned officers of the armed forces (Regular, Reserve, National Guard, Former, Retired) as well as current, former, or retired USCG, NOAA, and USPHS commissioned officers can join MOAA.

Michael A. Walker
LTC(Ret), USA
Membership Chair
zxywalk@gmail.com
contact@MOAABirmingham.org

THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

Why MOAA chapter membership matters.



MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM FOR MOAA AND Greater Birmingham Chapter - AL02

Name
Rank Branch of Service
☐ Active ☐ Retired ☐ Former ☐ Reserve ☐ National Guard ☐ Surviving Spouse
Spouse name
Address
City State ZIP
Date of birth Telephone
Email

(To ensure deliverability of MOAA communications, please provide a personal email address.)

Are you a member of MOAA? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

MOAA Member Number (if known)

Not a MOAA national member yet? Check here to receive a BASIC Membership at no cost to you.



And, for only \$4 a month, you can upgrade to **PREMIUM** membership, giving you immediate access to a full spectrum of career and financial resources, exclusive publications, college scholarships for dependents, and countless discounts on products and travel. **Visit moaa.org/join to learn more.**

How did you hear about MOAA Chapter involvement?

Are you a member of any other MOAA Chapter(s)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, which one(s)?

To complete enrollment:

• **Fill in this form** on your computer, save it, and email it to [add chapter contact information] as an attachment. Do not include credit card information. We will contact you to finalize payment if required; or

• **Print it out**, fill it in by hand, and mail it with a check made out to

[add chapter payment info]

; or

• Go to

[insert chapter webpage]

You will be opted in to receive e-communications from MOAA and your local chapter. You will be able to opt out of any further e-communications at any time. MOAA will not sell or share personal information.

Chapter membership and dues information:

First year - FREE

One year - \$20

Two years - \$35

Three years - \$50



Armed Forces Spouse Club WILL NOT MEET IN 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!!!

Spouses

By: Suzanne Walker, Staff Adviser to MOAA's Surviving Spouse Advisory Council.

The below resources can help surviving spouses navigate the complex world of obtaining military benefits, find much-needed comfort and support, and work through the difficult days after the loss of a spouse.

National MOAA. MOAA can be your first line of information. You'll find online resources such as links to most benefits agencies and articles written by experienced professionals and regular folks who have been where you are.

MOAA Chapters. Find your local MOAA chapter, and you will have a community of supportive friends who are willing to assist you with many of your questions. Most chapters have a surviving spouse liaison who is directly connected to a network of people who have a shared experience.

MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. Join this quarterly conference call for information and have your questions answered. It is a great forum to connect with the military community of surviving spouses. Hear firsthand from experts in financial planning, benefits information, and more. For additional information or to join, email mssvc02@gmail.com.

Military OneSource. Find information and resources for all areas of military life on this comprehensive website. Special sections include DoD Casualty Assistance information and links to other important resources.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). TAPS offers many resources for those experiencing the loss of a loved one, including a library of books, retreats, camps for children, and a social community.

Your Financial Adviser. Hopefully, you have a financial adviser who can assist in navigating the complex world of filing for benefits and how to manage financial resources in the days ahead. Be sure to have an adviser who is not trying to sell a product but can deliver expert advice. Look for someone with the certified financial planner (CFP) credential.

Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA is a very large government agency, and it might be difficult to navigate to get the answers you need. A veteran's service organization can assist you.

Gold Star Wives of America Inc. This organization was founded after World War II and provides a unique service for a widow/widower not available from any other organization.

Surviving Spouses of MOAA Facebook Page. If you have an account on Facebook, you can join this group and make connections with MOAA surviving spouses from across the U.S. The page has been a valued resource for information about the Survivor Benefit Plan / Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset and was instrumental in the advocacy that led to its repeal.

GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jerry Ingram	1
Beth Smith	2
Eless Brown	3
George Singleton	4
Len Mueninghoff	8
Leo Deason	9
Ron Bradstreet	11
Janeth Day	14
Jim Langley	16
James Wilson	17
Mike Walker	21
Susan Bradshaw	23
Bob Barefield	24
Cynthia Cox	24
Gene Cushman	24

Some recent updates to our website!

Check out our website for monthly updates at: <http://moaabirmingham.org/>. We have added recent photos to the Photo Gallery tab, new links to the Spouses/Surviving Spouses page (under the Chapter Info tab) and more useful links to the "Other Links" tab. And if you are wondering who that was sitting across the table from you at our last live meeting, try looking them up in the Photo Directory, which is under the Members Only tab. Yes, you need a log-in and password for that which is managed by our web developer. Just follow the directions for joining if you need a log-in. Any problems email me at don.lehman1@gmail.com and will get you squared away.

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.

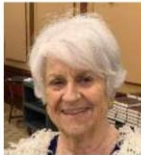
MOAA on-line photo directory

Below is a sample of our chapter on-line photo directory, available via a private link to our members only on our website. It can be found at: <http://moaabirmingham.org/#>. You will need to request a log-in/join if you gave not already in order to access the "Members Only" page. If you and or your spouse do not have and would like to have your photo(s) in the directory, please send a selfie or photo to Donna Martin at: donnamaemartin@aol.com.



Killian, III, Sam P.
4545 Magnolia Drive
Birmingham, AL 35242
Email: spkiii@bellsouth.net
Spouse: Martha T. Killian
marthak36@gmail.com

USN Ret CDR Life
205-408-7721 (h)
205-903-6638 (c)
BD: 8/28
BD: 11/10



Lehman, Donald D. (Don)
1204 Greystone Parc Drive
Birmingham, AL 35242
Email: don.lehman1@gmail.com
Spouse: Patricia A. Lehman
islandmomma1@gmail.com

USMC Ret LTCOL Life
404-441-3882 (c)
BD: 7/10
BD: 11/20
404-725-7152 (c)



Click on these to
access website
and/or Facebook



Website



Find us on:
facebook®

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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Birmingham AL 35213

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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

Donald Lehman

LtCol USMCR (retired)



Consulting Petroleum Geologist

AAPG CPG #4560

Lifetime memberships:

MOAABirmingham.org

AlabamaMarine.org

VVA.org - DAV.org

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



Still serving veterans – Once a Marine always a Marine



Zoom meeting September