



Greetings Greater Birmingham Chapter (MOAA) Members and Friends,

Goodbye 2020!!!! And hello to 2021!!! Here is hoping and praying that 2021 brings peace, prosperity, and a sense of normal to you, our Nation, and the World.

Great news as we move into 2021...a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine was approved by the FDA on December 11th. When you receive this message, many Americans will have received the vaccine and there is a plan in place for the rest of us. But the coronavirus is still with us so please continue doing what is right to protect yourselves and those around you.

We will have a Zoom meeting on January 7th. This is the Chapters annual Business Meeting and Board members will discuss our Chapters financial status, future Chapter, and ladies' programs, and elect and install our new officers. Please attend this meeting and let the board know where you would like the Chapter to go in the future. If you are not comfortable with Zoom contact me (803-761-2176) or Don Lehman (404-441-3882) and we will be glad you walk you through the process – it's really simple.

We have been actively recruiting new Board members but still have vacancies that need to be filled. Change in leadership is good and brings about new ideas and direction that improves organizations. Please consider becoming a Board member; your ideas for future growth and activities will make for a better, more robust Chapter. If you are interested in becoming a Board member please contact me (wescox72@charter.net) or Don Lehman (don.lehman1@gmail.com).

If you haven't renewed your Chapter membership for 2021 and beyond, please do so as soon as possible. Your membership is important to retired and serving service members and families as MOAA continues to fight for our earned benefits.

Cynthia and I wish you all the best of everything in 2021.

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

Respectfully,

Wes

Volume 121 Issue 1 January 2021

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)

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Treasurer Doug Markam, CPT, USN (Ret)

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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.

FIRST VP REPORT

January Zoom meeting:

Per the president's message, our January meeting will again be held virtual with a Zoom meeting scheduled for 3:00 PM on January 7th. Please try to tune in; it is simple and hopefully you will find the meeting engaging and informative. The link to join the meeting is below and will be sent out again via MailChimp closer to the meeting time.

Topic: GBC MOAA January membership meeting

Time: Jan 7, 2021 03:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom meeting by simply clicking on link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84269651961>

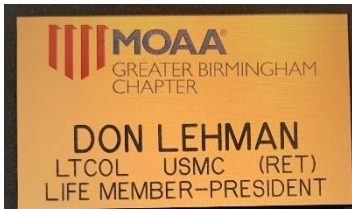
Meeting ID: 842 6965 1961

All meetings are recorded and available for viewing later at your convenience:

All monthly zoom meetings are recorded and saved as a semi-private "unlisted" YouTube video. The November meeting is still available to view if so desired, by clicking on the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR04RmtHA4> Google shows that we have had 30 viewers for our November recorded video thus far, with over 4 hours of total viewing time! So yes, technology really does work and you can watch our MOAA meeting anywhere, anytime if you missed it live.

New chapter nametags:

Our existing chapter nametags (if you have one) use a MOAA logo that is outdated and no longer used. Not a big deal unless you are an officer and may attend Alabama Council or National MOAA meetings. All board members have purchased a new nametag per below and they look great! If you are a Life member, the nametag is gold colored, white for others. Existing or new member that wish to purchase a name tag may do so. The cost is \$12.00. Just email me at don.lehman1@gmail.com and we will get it ordered.



Chapter website and photo directory

Please continue to check out our website for updates and current information. If you have not sent in a "selfie" for the photo directory, please do so to my email above. If you would like to view the photo directory on our website (it is updated often), go to the "Members Only" tab. If you have NOT registered for members only access, just hit "Login" and then follow instructions for "join us".

As a final note, I am looking forward to being your new president in 2021 and hopefully we will be able to meet and enjoy everyone's company again soon!

Don Lehman

First Vice President and President elect



WELCOME 2021

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



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Happy New Year! I, like you, are glad to get 2020 in the rearview mirror. While searching for something uplifting to share with you, I ran across a wonderful website: Christianity.com. I must confess, that is where much of my message for this month originates.

Whether 2020 brought you success, fulfillment, and joy, or you faced grief, setbacks, and struggles, you can look ahead to 2021 with HOPE. Jeremiah 29:11, one of my favorite verses from the Old Testament tells us "...for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Let us end this year with a thankful heart and start 2021 with peace and faith. Let's release the bitterness and frustrations of the past year (as a commercial on TV shows on a coffee cup, last year earned one star on a five-star rating!)

Let's pray that 2021 will be focused on healing ourselves through repentance and the renewing of our minds. After all, we have not only survived the Pandemic, which continues to bring stress into our lives, but also a very distressing national election, the results of which will be impacting all of us.

I recommend that we all pray this beautiful pray by Debbie McDaniel on New Year's Day:

Dear God, Thank You that you make all things new. Thank you for all that you have allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hard things, which have reminded us how much we need you and rely on your presence filling us every single day. We pray for your spirit to lead us each step of this New Year. We ask that you will guide our decisions and turn on our hearts to deeply desire you above all else. We ask that you will open doors needing to be open and close the ones that need to be shut tight. We ask that you would help us to release our grip on the things to which you've said "no," "not yet," or "wait." We ask for help to pursue you first, above every dream and desire you have put within our hearts.

We ask for your wisdom, for your strength and power to be constantly with us. We pray you would make us strong and courageous for the road ahead. Give us ability beyond what we feel able, let your gifts freely flow through us, so that you would be honored by our lives, and others would be drawn to you. We pray that you'd keep us far from the snares and traps of temptations. That you would whisper in our heart when we need to stand our ground.

We pray for protection over our families and friends. We ask for your hand to cover us and keep us distances from the evil intent of the enemy; that you would be a barrier to surround us, that we'd be safe in your hands. We pray that you would give us discernment and insight beyond our years, to understand your will, hear your voice, and know your ways. We pray for our community, our state, and our country. We pray for FAITH, not FEAR. We pray for a Happy and Safe New Year.

Mac Chandler
LTC, IN, US Army (Ret)

National Defense Authorization Act

The Senate passed a \$741 billion defense authorization bill December 11th with a veto-proof majority and sent the bill to the President for signature. However, a veto by the President would force a re-vote and could jeopardize some issues that MOAA supports.

Some of the approved NDDA provisions are:

Pay Raises – Active duty 3% military pay raise, effective Jan. 1, 2021 and general pay increase for Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay from \$250 to \$275 month.

Medical Billet Cuts and MTF Restructuring - One provision (Section 717) addresses medical billet cuts by prohibiting DoD and the services from reducing medical end strength authorizations for 180 days following enactment of the bill. It also requires DoD to conduct a review of medical manpower requirements that specifically considers the homeland defense mission and DoD's role in a pandemic influenza response, in addition to all other national defense strategy scenarios.

The other provision (Section 718) increases requirements for implementation plans for each MTF slated for restructure or realignment. It also requires DoD to certify to the congressional defense committees that a covered beneficiary affected by restructure or realignment of a MTF would have access to health care services through the purchased care component of the TRICARE program.

TRICARE - Expanded benefits available under the TRICARE Extended Care Health (ECHO) program, which covers services for a subset of military special needs families with individuals who are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities, a serious physical disability, or an extraordinary physical or psychological condition.

The bill includes no new TRICARE fees or copay increases.

Toxic Exposure - Three new presumptives were added to the list of illnesses linked to Agent Orange exposure - bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism.

National Guard and Reserves - Expands hazardous duty incentive pay for the Guard and Reserve component personnel who maintain a proficiency will receive monthly pay like their active-duty counterparts receive when fulfilling required proficiencies like parachute duty, aircrew duty, and many others.

Commissaries and Exchanges – Requires an updated best-case analysis (BCA) before moving forward with efforts to merge the back-office operations of the commissary and exchange systems.

SBP-DIC Offset Elimination Timeline

If you are a survivor receiving or eligible for SBP and are receiving DIC from the VA, expect the first increase in your SBP payment amount, due to the reduced offset, in your February 2021, pay. The three-year transition period will eliminate the SBP offset by 2023. The timeline to eliminate the SBP – DIC offset is:

2020 – The SBP was reduced by the full amount of DIC, \$1340 per month for most annuitants. The \$323 Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) continued.

2021 – The SBP offset amount will be ½ less, or \$906 (based on the 2021 DIC amount), plus SSIA.

2022 – The SBP offset amount will be 2/3 less, or \$453, plus SSIA.

2023 – No offset to the SBP amount, and SSIA will go away

Existing Members

Greater Birmingham Chapter membership dues renewal instructions:

Greater Birmingham Chapter dues align to the Calendar Year(CY). Existing GBC members **who have not renewed yet** have until January 1, 2021 to keep from missing this year's deadline. The goal is 100% chapter dues renewals by close of business on December 31, 2020.

You may renew your local Birmingham chapter dues online at either:

<https://www.moaa.org/micro/joinmoaa/join-moaa-2019/> -- or --

<https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership> You will need a credit card. If not, mail a check or money order for Birmingham chapter dues renewal payments to our PO Box address listed below.

New Members

Eligibility for the Greater Birmingham Chapter of MOAA:

MOAA membership is open to anyone who holds or has ever held a commission or warrant in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Surviving spouses of individuals who were eligible for membership are also encouraged to participate in Chapter activities.

The Military Officers Association of America is a membership-driven organization. When you join national MOAA you will also be given the option to join a local chapter. We encourage you to select the MOAA Birmingham Chapter and become one of us.

The link below is a new member form. Please check the red box for national MOAA "Basic" membership (which is free) and so is the first calendar year of new member dues for our local Birmingham chapter.

MOAA fillable new member join form

<http://moaabirmingham.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/MOAA-fillable-membership-form.pdf>

**Greater Birmingham Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 530153
Birmingham, AL 35253**

Michael A. Walker
LTC(Ret), USA
2VP/GBCM OAA Membership Chair
zxywalk@gmail.com



Surviving Spouse: There's a Facebook Group for You!

By: Nancy Mullen

Are you wondering where to go to get information about issues affecting surviving spouses and families? Are you looking for a supportive, nonjudgmental group to assist you in learning and keeping up to date on benefits and legislation impacting our surviving families? Need a pick-me-up or to connect with others who share similar interests as you? Join the [MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook page](#)!

Who can join? We have recently expanded our membership to include not only surviving spouses but also our families, military spouses, council and chapter surviving spouse liaisons, advocates, and others with an interest in issues that impact the survivor community, regardless of MOAA membership. Particularly in these times of COVID-19 restrictions, we all need a way to connect with others whom which we have common interests.

Is this a public or private group? This is a private group, and there are no fees or dues. You are required to answer a couple of brief questions and be approved by the administrators of the group to join. These questions are designed to ensure we provide a safe place to share information and connect with other like-minded people as well as protect the group from those who do not have a legitimate interest in our issues.

The group's rules are simple, and members may be removed at the discretion of the administrators. Here are a few of the do's and don'ts to remember:

- Do be kind and courteous; remember the Golden Rule and treat everyone with respect.

Armed Forces Spouse Club **Previously the Armed Forces Spouse Club has been deactivated**

- Do respect the privacy of the group. Comments made within this group are not to be shared outside of the group. Some of the discussions can be sensitive and private in nature, and it is important that we can trust each other. Files may also not be shared without the approval of the administrators. Posts within the page cannot be seen by the Facebook "friends" of others in the group, unless they are members of the group themselves.
- Do not post sensitive information, such as your phone number, address, social security number, or bank account information. If you need advice that requires you to share this type of information, please privately contact the administrators for assistance.
- Do remember that "tone" is sometimes difficult to determine online. Stop and think before reacting negatively as you may have misinterpreted a comment or response. Remember that many of us are grieving, so please give a little grace.
- Do not post about politics or political events. This page is apolitical and will not be used to promote any candidate or political party.
- Do feel free to contribute material to the site, provided it does not violate group rules. If you are unsure, please reach out to one of the Facebook group administrators.
- Do not sell products or advertise your business. This is also not a dating site.

We intend this page to be not only an efficient way to disseminate information on benefits, proposed legislation, advocacy efforts, etcetera, but also a way for all of us to connect and uplift one another. Feel free to share an encouraging or funny meme and pictures of your loved ones and pets and post comments supporting each other.

Our group is expanding, and we would be happy to welcome more members. We would love to get to know each of you and look forward to your comments on our page.

GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Steve Driggers | 4 |
| Anne Hayes | 8 |
| Wes Cox | 11 |
| Sumter Coleman | 12 |
| Tammy Sample | 14 |
| Pat Marvin | 18 |
| Joseph Przybyzewski | 19 |
| Butch Pair | 20 |
| David McCrorie | 21 |
| Doug Markham | 22 |
| Heidi Mueninghoff | 24 |
| Don Broxson | 24 |
| Wayne Hay | 25 |
| Robert Waudby | 27 |
| Bob Roper | 28 |
| Chris Stricklin | 28 |
| Carolyn Bellamy | 29 |
| Jason Spruiell | 31 |

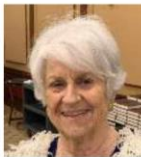
MOAA on-line photo directory

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®

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.



WILLIAM C. McDONALD III

Shadow Tiger Press

billy@shadowtiger.org

1401 Blenheim Place
Birmingham AL 35213

(205) 790-7575

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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.

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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 IN JANUARY