

Greetings Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA Members and Friends!

As you receive this newsletter, me and many of our MOAA members have received at least the first dose of the COVID vaccine! The Birmingham VA is doing a great job of getting the vaccine into the arms of veterans. There may still be an opportunity to receive the shot in February. Call the VA 205-933-8101, then Vicki at Ext 3844 for an appointment.

I am looking forward to being your chapter president for the next two years. We will have some more challenging times again, but with the vaccine, maybe there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We should have a much better 2021 than 2020! Installation of officers and new board members took place on our Zoom meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup>. I have some wonderful people to work with and appreciate all of the assistance than everyone has offered.

**We will Zoom again for our meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM.** Our own Mark Rubino, LT USNR, will be presenting on his deployment to the Middle East. We have a board meeting scheduled for the following week too, so please bring any ideas that you have for where you would like to see the chapter go for 2021 and we will add to the board meeting agenda. If you are not comfortable with Zoom, contact me (404-441-3882) and I will be glad you walk you through the process – it is really simple.

If you haven't renewed your Chapter membership, 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.

Patricia and I wish you all the absolute best of everything in 2021. Hopefully, we can start meeting in person again soon. In the meantime, stay well and be safe!

Respectfully,

*Don*

Volume 121 Issue 2 February 2021

## Officers' Call

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

*President* Don Lehman, LTC, USMC (Ret)

*1<sup>st</sup> VP* Harold Coghlan, CW4 USA (Ret)

*2<sup>nd</sup> VP* Michael Walker, LTC, USA (Ret)

*Secretary* Margie Argo, LTC, USAR (Ret)

*Treasurer* Doug Markam, CPT, USN (Ret)

*Past Pres.* Wes Cox, Col, USA (Ret)

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

*Director* Mark Melanson, Col USA (Ret)

*Director* Bob Barefield, Col USA (Ret)

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

*Legislative Affairs* Eless Brown, Col USA

*Personal Affairs* Anne Hartline

*Surviving Spouse Liaison* Donna Martin

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

### **Statement of Publication**

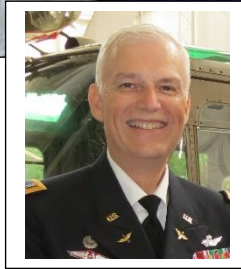
Officer's Call is the newsletter of the Greater Birmingham Chapter—Military Officers Association of America. It is published once each month to inform the membership of issues and activities of interest to all.

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).

## BIOGRAPHIES OF NEW OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS



**New First Vice President, CW04 (ret) Harold A. Coghlan.** I served 40 years in the Active Army, plus Army Reserve, all of it in Aviation, from 1977 to 2017, retiring as a CW4. During my military service I was lucky enough to fly a wide variety of Army airplanes and helicopters, from UH-1, OH-58, AH-1, AH-6, and others, as well as U-8, U-21, RU-21, C-12, RC-12, C-23, C-21, UC-35 airplanes, plus serving an exchange tour with the Air Force and qualifying on fighter jets, such as the A-37B, F-5E and others. I was privileged to serve in Cavalry, Attack, Medevac, Test Flight, Special Operations, Aerial Reconnaissance, VIP, and Flight Inspection Units throughout my career, in addition to having taught at the School house in Fort Rucker, and in the only Spanish Speaking Military Pilot School (at Ft Rucker).

After serving around 10 years in Active Duty, I transitioned to the active Guard and Reserves, while flying as a Commercial Airline Pilot in a variety of jets, such as the Boeing 737 and 707. During the various (and typical of the industry) airline layoffs or downsizing, I would either do short 6–18-month tours on Active Duty, or do other aviation jobs, such as being a corporate pilot, or an Army Civil Service DAC Pilot or Instructor.

During my time on Active Duty, or during periods of Activation with the Guard/Reserves, I served on multiple deployments during four wars, in El Salvador in the 80s, Gulf War 1 in the 90's, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan in "Gulf War 2", completing 7 deployments (9 years) and flying over 2500 hours in combat. I received some of the usual awards, to include LOM, MSM, and others. My proudest achievement was always having brought my crew back alive and safe, as well as having safely flown over 22,500 hours.

My family has always been incredibly supportive of my military and flying habits. I married my wife of 35 years, Patricia K Clopton Coghlan in 1984, when she was a Medical Service Corps 1 Lt serving in a MASH hospital, and have taken her around the world on assignments, or just vacations. We have two children, Andrew (33) and Gabby (25).

I continue to fly as an Airline Captain (at least for a couple more years when I hit mandatory age for retirement from the airlines), enjoying flying jets around, as well as volunteering as a UH-1 Huey pilot with an Army Historical demonstration organization. I have been very blessed to have had a long and exciting flying career, to have had the opportunity to serve my country, and to have a great family.





**New Board member COL (Ret.) Robert L. "Bob" Barefield.** Bob is a decorated U. S. Army Veteran who has lived his life for his country both as an active career Army Airborne Ranger and in retirement serving Veterans. Barefield grew up on a farm in Kentucky where he learned his steadfast work ethic. He entered the U. S. Army in 1968 where he served as an Infantry Soldier, retiring as Colonel in 1998.

Among his assignments included duty in Vietnam and the invasion of Cambodia with 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. In March 1970 Barefield was wounded as a Platoon Leader with Co A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 8 Cavalry, 1<sup>st</sup> CAV DIV when his company fought its way in and rescued Company C which was surrounded by an NVA Regiment. Company A received the Presidential Unit Citation for this heroic rescue in September 2014, 44 years later.

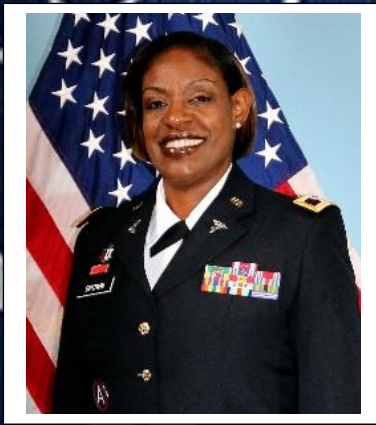
Some of Barefield's other Army Command and Staff assignments included: Director of Plans, XVIII Airborne Corps including humanitarian relief during Hurricane Andrew, 1992; Director of Advanced Operations Studies Fellowship; 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault); 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division; Inspector General of U.S. Forces in Panama; Instructor at U.S. Army Ranger School, 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Training Battalion; commanded the 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne in Panama leading up to Operation Just Cause; and last Commander, 5th Brigade, U.S. Army Cadet Command.

Some of Barefield's many military awards and decorations include: Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, Army Aviation Wings, Master Parachutist Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with "V," Bronze Star Medal (3rd Award), Purple Heart (5th Award), Meritorious Service Medal (7th Award), Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal with "V" and the State of Florida Distinguished Service Medal.

A few of Barefield's patriotic awards are: Life Leaders "Loyalty" Award, Dave Wood "Veteran Supporter" Award, Alabama Dept American Legion "Serving our Veterans" Award, ESGR "Seven Seals" Leadership Award, DAR "Distinguished Citizen" Award, Induction into Alabama "Senior Citizen Hall of Fame," selection as Alabama "Top 50 over 50," and Major General Jim Livingston Patriot Award.

Barefield's passion today is patriotic causes, especially the Scenic Overlook Project at the Alabama National Cemetery where he was Chairman of the Support Committee (SCALNC) for 10 years, and is now Chairman Emeritus. The SCALNC raised funds to build a Scenic Overlook, where families and friends can gather to reflect on the lives of their deceased veterans. He is active in all of the VSOs and has held office in various organizations including the American Legion Ryan Winslow Post 911. He and wife, Nancy co-chair Patriotism In Action and he is a Trustee/Board of Directors for Life Leaders America.

Bob and Nancy Barefield have been married for 47 years. They have three children and three grandchildren.



**New Legislative Affairs Officer, Colonel Eless Brown USA.** Eless was born in Selma, Alabama. She enlisted in the Regular U.S. Army in 1986, serving in Germany and the Military District of Washington. In 1993, after successfully completing the Senior ROTC program through Howard University in Washington, DC she commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves Medical Service Corps. Colonel Brown continues to serve in the U.S. Army Reserves and has held numerous positions throughout her 30+-year military career including being deployed to the Middle East in support of Desert Storm/Desert Shield and Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom. She is currently serving as the Brigade Commander of the Southeast Medical Area Readiness Support Group in Nashville, Tennessee. Colonel Brown also has a distinguished career in the federal civil service. She is employed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Birmingham District Office as the Enforcement/Compliance Manager, overseeing all private sector investigations in her area of responsibility, which includes Alabama, Mississippi, and the Pan-handle of Florida.

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As I write this, we are still in the grips of the Covid-19 Pandemic, but the good news is that almost 300,000 doses of vaccine been allocated to the state of Alabama so far. We are finally seeing some progress being made against this virus!

The other good news is that the University of Alabama soundly defeated Ohio State in the college football national championship game, and Bama is back on top. All is right in the football world, so maybe this victory will translate into correcting the rest of the world as well. RTR.

We had an election in November; a very contentious one, and now the new President has been sworn in. I want to quote the Apostle Paul here, from Romans 13: 1- 4: "Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God. Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear from authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a servant of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> is Groundhog Day, and everyone knows what that means, don't we? I personally hope that the winter is short, as I like planting in the spring. February 15<sup>th</sup> is President's Day. Remember to set aside a few minutes to give thanks for past presidents and pray for our current one.

Ash Wednesday is February 17<sup>th</sup>. For Christians this is an important day of prayer and reflection, as it marks the start of the Lenten period leading up to Easter. Now is a good time to be thinking about what you are going to give up for Lent!

Back in April, I included another verse of wisdom from Paul: Romans 8:28. It reads, "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." As we go about our daily living this month, let's remember to be thankful for the many gifts that we have received, even during this time of Covid. Continue to pray for our community, state, and country. Have FAITH, not FEAR. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.

God Bless you, your family, and the United States of America.

Mac Chandler  
LTC, IN, US Army (Ret)



## FEBRUARY SPEAKER

Mark Rubino, LT USNR, will be presenting on his deployment to the Middle East.

# Happy Valentine's Day

### 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



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**Legislative Update February 2020** (visit Legislative Action at <http://www.moaa.org>)

### **Benefits at Risk as Congress Advances Military Health System Reform Measures**

(By Karen Ruedisueli, MOAA's Director of Government Relations, Health Affairs)

Although we were happy MOAA's advocacy efforts paid off with a fiscal 2020 NDAA halting military medical billet cuts, our fight to ensure Military Health System (MHS) Reform improves the military health care benefit is far from over. Despite concerns from advocacy groups, the recently enacted NDAA indicates Congress is not backing down on its vision for MHS Reform.

The legislation's joint explanatory statement includes the following message to the Department of Defense:

*Over the past four years, Congress has enacted several provisions designed to guide the Department of Defense in implementing a major reform of the military health system to make it more effective, efficient, and less costly. ... The conferees expect the Secretary of Defense to fully implement the law and to accomplish these critically important reforms expeditiously.*

#### **What Is the Purpose Behind Congress' MHS Reform?**

For decades, various committees, commissions and federal government entities have issued reports highlighting a need to re-evaluate or restructure the MHS. Most recently, the *2015 Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) Report* highlighted numerous MHS shortfalls in both its readiness and beneficiary care missions. The MHS has also been the focus of negative media coverage including a *2014 15 New York Times* series on patient safety concerns and a recent *US News and World Report* investigation.

After the MCRMC report was released, leaders of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees promised a major reform and oversight effort of the MHS. With the FY17 NDAA, Congress directed a restructuring of the MHS designed to address a variety of problems with both medical readiness and the provision of beneficiary care, including:

- Sub-optimal MTF case load for maintaining uniformed medical provider currency in skills needed for combat casualty care.
- Low surgical volumes leading to patient safety issues and concerns about uniformed surgeon skill degradation.
- Patient dissatisfaction with access and quality of care/patient experience within MTFs
- A lack of focus on value and patient outcomes in the TRICARE purchased care network

Although numerous lawmakers have stated MHS Reform is not intended as a cost-cutting exercise, Congress has stated their objectives include greater efficiencies and lower total management cost of the MHS.

#### **What Are the Key Elements of MHS Reform?**

It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of Congressionally directed change currently underway within the MHS. The FY17 NDAA alone includes 131 pages of MHS Reform provisions. It is helpful to think about MHS reform in terms of three main lines of effort:

**TRICARE Reform:** The Defense Health Agency (DHA) has already rebranded TRICARE

Continued on next page



Standard/Extra to TRICARE Select; established an Annual Open Enrollment period with Qualifying Life Events; created beneficiary groups based on sponsor date of entry into military service; converted TRICARE Standard/Extra percent cost shares to TRICARE Select fixed dollar copays; and significantly increased TRICARE Prime copays. With the next generation of T-5 contracts, DHA is considering a complete reconfiguration of TRICARE contracts to provide greater beneficiary choice and value-based care.

Transition: DHA assumed administration and management responsibilities from the Army, Navy, and Air Force for all U.S. military hospitals and clinics on Oct. 1. Goals include patient facing standardization across the direct care system (i.e., military hospitals and clinics); improved health outcomes, access to care, and patient experience; and lower total management cost.

Transformation: MHS Reform also includes a reconfiguration of the direct care system with a greater focus on readiness and maintaining medical provider currency. Transformation hasn't officially started but will eventually include MTF right-sizing and realignment; conversion of some uniformed medical billets to civilian positions; change in the mix of care provided at MTFs; consolidation of specialty care/establishment of Centers of Excellence; increase in civilian training agreements for combat casualty care skills; expanded eligibility for MTF care for veterans and civilians with the right medical cases.

Our top priority is to ensure beneficiary out-of-pocket costs and access to high quality care are protected. We also stand by to ask the tough questions about how MHS reforms will impact medical readiness and the uniformed provider pipeline.

We are concerned DoD has so far approached MHS Reform as a cost-cutting exercise, without the focus on readiness and beneficiary care improvements Congress intended. Our 2020 health care advocacy efforts will be laser focused on ensuring MHS Reform improves care for beneficiaries while maintaining the value of the military health benefit.

#### **VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Rate Increase for 2020**

The basic monthly tax-free DIC benefit will increase from \$1,319.04 in 2019 to \$1,340.14 for 2020, with additional amounts also seeing the 1.6% increase.

If the surviving spouse also gets a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payment from the deceased veteran's military service, they may see their SBP payment decrease by the amount of the DIC benefit thanks to federal offset rules. However, there is partial reimbursement of this offset, known as the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA).

The Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA)

The SSIA will be paid to surviving spouses who have their SBP payments decreased by the amount of their DIC payments.

The SBP and SSIA are taxable income, while the DIC is not. The SSIA amount for 2020 is \$323. Like DIC, it increases each year based on the annual cost-of-living adjustment.

## RECRUITER'S CORNER

### **Dues renewal season is underway.**

Notices for chapter dues renewal were sent out. We appreciate our existing members and encourage those up for renewal to respond to our requests. Local dues support initiatives and events of the Greater Birmingham Chapter of MOAA. Currently, those delinquent on their chapter dues are:

Don Baker	Rudolph Morgan
Victor Bey	Wayne Morse
Herbert Brickson	Ed Rowe
Jonathan Burt	Joe Sarver
Linda Butler	Sabon Shelton
MaryJo Cragon	Chandler Smith
Janeth Day	Keith Smith
Kyle Dyar	Chris Stricklin
Earl Hicks	Jack Sullivan
Mike Kozlik	Larry Vaughn
Rickey Lindley	Angel Vazquez
Llivina Elena	Roula Wolff

If any of these listed names have paid their renewal dues, please disregard.

### **Ad sponsors for 2021**

We have advertisement sponsors in our monthly newsletter that go a long way in helping to defer chapter expenses. Renewal/new sponsorships began in January. If you or a business owner that you know would be interested in supporting our chapter newsletter with an ad, please send their contact information to the below address and an add sponsor packet will be mailed to them. Thank you very much.

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

Michael A. Walker  
LTC(Ret), USA  
2VP/GBCMCAA Membership Chair  
[zxywalk@gmail.com](mailto:zxywalk@gmail.com)







## **The Value of Sleep**

**By: Kathy Thorp**

All of us need sleep to function, as sleep is one of the most important secrets in maintaining our everyday health. Sleep clears the mind by removing daily toxins at night, which is vital for our mood, disposition, decision-making ability. Studies have shown quality sleep prevents the diseases of tomorrow. Did you know sleep deprivation is a society-wide safety and health issue of our time?

Do you have trouble sleeping at night? Do you fall asleep only to wake up in the middle of the night tossing and turning? Think about what you do during the day and keep a sleep journal, as various activities can encourage or discourage a good night sleep. From exercise and diet to a stressful work environment, all of these have a huge impact on your qualitative sleep.

Insomnia also might be caused by exposure to artificial light such as smartphones or televisions. Anxiety, in general, can aggravate our sleep routine. The key here is to try to break the cycle, by practicing a repeatable nighttime routine, going to bed at the same time each night, avoiding artificial light, and finding the "thing" that relaxes you at night.

Experts say sleep is one of the best natural medicines for our bodies. It is our superpower to cope with the daily responsibilities and challenges that we endure each day. Take the time now and invest in your health by learning all you can about sleep.

A logo for "Support Military Spouses". The text "Support" is in blue, "Military" is in red, and "Spouses" is in blue. A heart shape is formed by red and white stripes, with a blue field containing white stars. The entire logo is framed by two horizontal blue lines with white stars.



## GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Herbert Osborne	1
Betsy Frazer	5
Kent Jackson	8
Larry Michalove	14
Victor Bey	15
Woody Cox	16
Carol Beall	18
Donna Wall	24

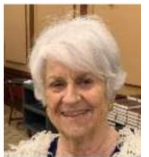
### MOAA on-line photo directory

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](mailto:donnamaemartin@aol.com).



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



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Spouse: Patricia A. Lehman  
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USMC Ret LTCOL Life  
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BD: 7/10  
BD: 11/20  
404-725-7152 (c)



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### 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.





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

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



## Donald Lehman

LtCol USMCR (retired)

### Consulting Petroleum Geologist

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