



**Come hear another great speaker**

We had another great speaker last month with BG Johnny Bass and have another coming up this month. We will hear John Pinion, the Birmingham VA Outreach Coordinator, speak about the VA health system and resources. A bio of John and more on his talk can be found herein.

**Wear your uniform (or coat and tie optional)**

December is the traditional month that we invite members to wear their uniform to the meeting; even if you cheat and have bought a new uniform recently since the old one may have shrunk! It’s been a long time since we have done this, so come and wear it with pride. Others are encouraged to dress up and men to wear a coat and tie.

**Please, pay for your dinner if you RSVP!**

We have had some “no shows” for our dinners recently; members who RSVP and do not show for the meeting. The chapter still has to pay for your dinner even if you do not show up, so please, plan accordingly. We will begin charging members soon who RSVP and do not show up.

**Danberry residents have the option to eat before they come to the meeting for no cost, so...**

Please let us know when you RSVP if you do not plan to have dinner. You can have dinner before the meeting on your Danberry meal plan or in your apartment if you like.

**Need a MOAA name badge?**

See flyer herein with details on how to order. We will be submitting a bulk order soon, so please let us know if you want one.

(Continued on page 5)

Respectfully,

*Don & Patricia*



Volume 122 Issue 12 December 2022

# Officers’ Call

- 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 Markham, CPT, USN (Ret)*
- Past Pres. Wes Cox, Col, USA (Ret)*
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- Director Mark Melanson, Col USA (Ret)*
- Director Bob Barefield, Col USA (Ret)*
- Director Richard McKinley, CPT USAF (Ret)*
- Chaplain Dan Phifer, 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).

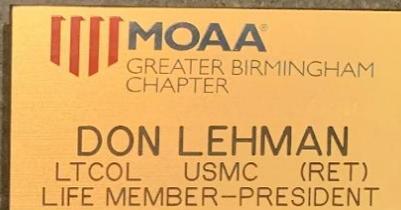
## DECEMBER MEETING/SPEAKER

### John Pinion, VA Outreach Coordinator

John's presentation is entitled **"America's Heroes, the Best for the Best"**.

John graduated from the University of Montevallo with a BA in Social Work. In 2005, he completed my MS at the University of Alabama. He subsequently worked for the Department of Human Resources and in 2009, began providing mental health treatment for Veterans in a rural clinic in Alabama. This sparked John's passion to help Veterans and for them to get the care that they deserve. In 2018, John became the Outreach Coordinator with the Birmingham VA. As the Outreach Coordinator, John assists Veterans to access and navigate the VA health care system.

It is the Birmingham VA goal to provide superior health care to our Heroes. We have numerous specialty clinics, prosthetic devices, research clinics and superior service providers. However, we cannot help Veterans if they are not enrolled. We want to take care of America's Heroes and continue to strive to exceed their expectations. A quote that has been attributed to Theodore Roosevelt "Nobody cares how much you know, till they know how much you care". If you are a Veteran, we want to provide superior care **for** you because we care **about** you.



We will be making a bulk order for nametags soon. The cost is \$13 each and samples are above. If you are a Life member, present or past president, your nametag will be golden color. If not, it will be white. Please contact Don for details if you would like one.

Don Lehman

[don.lehman1@gmail.com](mailto:don.lehman1@gmail.com)

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Have you ever fallen asleep at the wrong time or in the wrong place? That is embarrassing but it's a common experience. It is hard to fight off sleep when your body decides to shut down. During the 2019 Super Bowl game, Karisa Maxwell spotted a man sleeping in the stands and took a photo. She kept an eye on the man and reported that he slept through the entire first quarter of the game. She posted the photo of the Super Bowl Sleeper to Twitter that afternoon. By evening it had received almost 5 million views.

To put that in perspective, this Super Bowl game was viewed by an estimated 102 million people worldwide. The average ticket price was between \$5,000-\$6,000. The Kansas City Chiefs, who hadn't won a Super Bowl in 50 years, came from behind to win it. And this fan, who was sitting in the thick of all this excitement, couldn't help but fall asleep.

I'm just glad he woke up to see the halftime show. It seems like the world can be divided between people who have trouble falling asleep, and people who have trouble **waking up**. I'm not sure which is more annoying.

Jesus gave a warning to us in Matthew 24:36-44 which can be summed up in two words: Wake up! He said we are not to be afraid. We do not know when He will return. We are to pay attention to the needs right around us. During this Hanukkah and Advent/Christmas Season HAVE CARING EYES for opportunities to help those in need!

Blessings during this holiday month.

Dan Phifer

Chaplain (LTC) US Army Retired

## RECRUITER'S CORNER

### Renew Your Chapter Dues

The chapter dues deadline is here for those members who are coming due before the 2023 calendar year. Unless you have already paid, you will receive a series of phone calls. Please feel free to go ahead and renew your chapter membership online at <https://chapterdues.moa.org/Membership.aspx>

**The goal remains 100%-chapter dues renewal**

There is an alternative available for those without a credit card. If you are coming due in 2023, RSVP for the November dinner meeting, invite a prospective member to sign up at the check-in table, and pay your dues in person.

### Chapter Dues Options

1-Year chapter dues = \$20

2-Year chapter dues = \$35

3-Year chapter dues = \$50

Thank you to those who have shown continuous support.

Michael A. Walker

LTC(Ret), USA

GBC MOAA/2VP Membership

[contact@MOABirmingham.org](mailto:contact@MOABirmingham.org)

### **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

### Vets Now Qualify for Toxin-Exposure Screenings House – Originally Appeared on Armed Forces News

All veterans are now eligible for screenings for toxic exposure. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the change, which was triggered by the PACT Act that requires delivery of care and benefits to millions who were exposed to toxins and their survivors. The screenings would take about 10 minutes to perform. Veterans would be asked if they believe they were exposed to poisons. Those who say yes would then be asked for more specific details. The list of toxins would include open-air burn pit and airborne hazards, Gulf War-related exposures, Agent Orange, radiation, contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and other materials and situations. Veterans who need care and merit benefits related to exposures would be directed to the appropriate clinicians and case workers for assistance.

### More Veterans Running for Congress Since 2012 by Leo Shane III originally appeared on Military Times

Nearly 200 Veterans won major-party primaries this year and vied for a seat in Congress in the midterm elections, making this the largest field of candidates with military experience in a decade. The larger pool did not necessarily lead to an increase in the number of Veterans in office, since many hopefuls were in districts that significantly favored their opponent's party. According to research by Veterans Campaign and Military Times, 184 House candidates with military experience won major party primaries and appeared on ballots in November. Another 12 candidates with military experience won U.S. Senate primaries. The 196 candidates represent an increase of about 7% from the 2020 election and the highest total since 2012. But it is still a significant drop-off from the pre-September 11 era, when the number of Veteran candidates – and Veteran election winners – was significantly higher. The field for the 2000 congressional election boasted 218 candidates with military experience in the House alone. In 1997, 197 Veterans served in the House and Senate. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan led to an increase in the number of young Veterans in America over the last two decades. Of the 194 running this year, 58 (above 30%) began their military service after January 1, 2000. Of the current Veteran candidates, 126 ran as Republicans while 66 ran as Demarcate.

### What's Next for MOAA's Budget and NDAA Priorities With Lame-Duck Congress By Jen Goodale

With the lame-duck session for Congress on the horizon, MOAA is closely tracking progress in two areas: full funding of the government and the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). It has been 26 years since Congress managed to pass a full budget before October 1, the start of the fiscal year. Another failure to do so means federal operations – to include DoD, the VA, and other programs affecting those in the uniformed services – continue at current spending levels. On September 30, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government through December 16. While passage of a CR is better than a government shutdown, it does not provide funding needed for the annual pay raises, quality health care coverage, and quality-of-life or new programs to enhance the lives of servicemembers and their families. MOAA continues to engage with Congressional staffers, DoD leadership, and other stakeholders to urge lawmakers to pass a budget resolution and the FY 2023 NDAA before the end of the year. Join MOAA's efforts and use the [Legislative Action Center](#) to ask your senators to protect pay and benefits for servicemembers, their families, and survivors.



MERRY CHRISTMAS



### Finding a New Normal

By: Barbara Smith

It's been a long time since I became a surviving spouse, and during that time, I've gone through many stages. None were easy, but all were necessary. No journey out of grief is straight forward. We all handle it differently, and it's how we deal with it that makes a difference.

We must choose to be positive and live or be unhappy the rest of our lives. I chose to be positive, but I also realized that I needed to find a purpose.

When my husband died at the age of 57, I didn't know where to turn or what to do. I became aware that my path forward was to do what I could to make sure no other survivor felt as alone and unprepared as I was. To that end, I joined my local MOAA chapter, took on the job as their surviving spouse liaison, was appointed to the national MOAA's Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, and became active in the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter.

I also found not only a mentor but a dear friend because of a chance meeting in 2015. Patricia "Pat" Farnsworth shared her vast knowledge of surviving spouse issues, her wisdom, and her wonderful sense of humor. She encouraged me to do the best I believed I could be — and then pushed for more. Pat died on Oct. 14 at age 86. She was an inspiration to many and a friend to all.

We will never forget our loved ones. We will always miss them. But I have found peace and comfort in my new normal. I hope you find the same

(Continued from page 1)

#### **Tis the Season!**

Thanksgiving is here and Xmas is coming up. Family and friends are the real gifts of life, so enjoy! Hope to see all at the December meeting.

#### **It's time to renew your chapter membership**

If you received a notice to renew your chapter membership, your continued support would be appreciated. See details in the Recruiter Corner on how to renew. You may also use the on-line renewal link to make a year-end donation to our chapter. Thanks.

Respectfully,  
*Don & Patricia*

## GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Traudy	
Richmond	1
Maureen Piatt	1
Wade	
Humphries	9
Esther	
Merriam	9
Kathleen	
Ladner	14
Gigi McGraw	16
Greg Vitalis	20
Stella Gamble	21
Joy Toffel	21
Mike Stripling	21
Marge Jeffries	24
Al Lassiter	25
Marilyn	
Bassett	27
Ann Langley	27
Mark Rubino	28
Mamie Flynn	31
Joan Bailey	31
Lin Musgrove	31

### ID CARDS

#### **DoD: No Further Extensions Planned for Expired ID Cards!**

Many of us have had our ID cards automatically extended due to the COVID. However, that indefinite extension is now ending on January 31, 2022. If your ID card has an expiration date that is past or expires this month, you will need to renew it ASAP. There are several locations that you can do that here in the Birmingham area, just google "military ID card renewal near me" and a bunch of them will come up. Some may require an appointment and be sure that you have the needed documentation when you go; they can tell you what you need when you call.

Don Lehman

### 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  
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205-903-6638 (c)  
BD: 8/28  
BD: 11/10



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



### 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.

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

**Eligibility:** Honorably serving, former, or retired Warrants, Chief Warrants, or commissioned officers of the armed forces (Regular, Reserve, National Guard) as well as current, former, or retired USCG, NOAA, and USPHS commissioned officers are eligible to join MOAA. If you know of anyone who may qualify to belong to the chapter, have them contact us or better yet, invite them to an upcoming dinner meeting.

**Dues:** Until it changes, 1-Year dues are still only \$20 (2 Years = \$35). The 3-Year chapter renewal option is the best bargain at \$50.

Complete application in newsletter or complete at <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx>



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## 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)

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## PGA TOUR SUPERSTORE

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## 145 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West, Alabaster, Alabama



### Hours

Thursday 4–10PM

Friday 4–11PM

Saturday 3–11PM

Sunday Closed

Monday Closed

Tuesday 4–10PM

Wednesday 4–10PM

*Veteran Owned and Operated*



December 1 meeting will begin with social at 6 pm and meal 6:30 p.m.