



A very busy month of November

There is a lot coming up in November! Celebrations, memorials and honoring many of our fellow veterans. We had a great presentation by BG Jeff Newton in October, and I was pleased to see many of our members engaging with him afterwards to get their questions answered.

Our November meeting on the 2nd, we will have Capt. Matt Ondusko USMC, the I&I (Inspector/Instructor) staff from the Echo Co. Marine reserve unit in Bessemer. He will speak to us about the Toys for Tots program and provide an overview of the Bessemer reserve unit and their mission. Please consider bringing a new toy or making a donating to the Toys for Tots. Dinner information and Captain Ondusko's bio are included below.

Our LTC Linda Demarco USA (ret) is our veteran of the year! She will be honored at the annual Veterans Day banquet on November 10th. The deadline has passed to purchase tickets, but MOAA will have at least one table filled to cheer her on. Linda's bio is included herein which will be read at the presentation ceremony that evening.

Col Bob Barefield, USA (ret) has been selected as this year's honoree for the Folds of Honor and will be presented at their annual banquet at the Old Overton Country club on October 30th.

(Continued on page 4)

Respectfully,
Don & Patricia



Website

Volume 123 Issue 11

November 2023

Officers' Call

President Don Lehman, LTC, USMC (Ret)

1st VP Harold Coghlan, CW4 USA (Ret)

2nd VP Michael Walker, LTC, USA (Ret)

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Treasurer Doug Markham, CPT, USN (Ret)

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Director Mark Melanson, Col USA (Ret)

Director Bob Barefield, Col USA (Ret)

Director Jeff Newton, BG, ANG (Ret)

Chaplain Dan Phifer, LTC, USA (Ret)

Legislative Affairs Vacant

Personal Affairs Anne Hartline

Surviving Spouse Liaison Lynn Phifer

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.

NOVEMBER 2 MEETING

SPEAKER

Captain Matthew J. Ondusko
Inspector-Instructor, Company E, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion

Matthew J. Ondusko hails from Point Pleasant, New Jersey. He completed Marine Recruit Training at Parris Island, South Carolina in 2005, then going on to the infantry and an amphibian assault crewman. He subsequently served with the 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion, Camp Lejeune, before being deployed to Iraq serving in Ramadi and Fallujah. Upon returning to the US, he was assigned to the Assault Amphibian School, where he was an instructor and assistant Ops Chief. He was accepted into the enlisted commissioning program in 2014, attended San Diego State University graduating with a BA degree in public administration and in 2017. He was the onto Quantico, VA and the Basic School where he graduated as a distinguished graduate. After Combat Engineer Officer school at Camp Lejeune, NC, he served with the 2nd Combat Engineer Bn located there, Twentynine Palms, California, Setermoen, Norway in support of Marine Rotational Forces Europe and Crisis Response in Africa. In August of 2021, Captain Ondusko reported to Company E, 4th CEB in Bessemer and assumed command of the Inspector-Instructor Staff, where he currently serves.

Captain Ondusko's personal decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Menu: Greek Chicken, Roasted Potatoes, Butter Peas, Garlic Biscuits, Key Lime Cheesecake

Dinner cost will be \$20 per person.

Reservations must be made by noon Monday, October 30, 2023, with Doug Markham via phone - 205-420-2631 or email - dgmarkham3143@gmail.com

Social at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Charles Kuralt traveled across the U.S. meeting interesting people. He told about an old man he met in Kansas. *"We never caught his name,"* he wrote in "A Life on The Road." The old man was a pilot. Charles and his crew were doing a story about an artist whose canvases were 80-acre fields. The best way to view this unusual artwork was from a plane. Kuwait and his photographer spotted an old J-2 Piper Cub parked in a barnyard. They asked the old farmer if he would fly them. *"Sure, I'll take you up,"* the farmer replied. *"We need to take the door off so we can take pictures,"* the photographer told the farmer. *"Fine!"* was his reply. Flying at 2,000 feet the photographer asked the old pilot, *"How long ago did you get your ticket?"* *"Ticket?"* the man asked. *"You know, your pilot's license,"* the photographer explained. *"I don't have any pilot's license,"* the old farmer told them. *"I just found this thing wrecked out here and patched it up and taught myself how to fly it."*

It is never too late to learn, to grow, to have new experiences. We are never too old or too young. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but we know that God has a plan for little old you and me. For that we are eternally thankful!

Blessings,
Dan Phifer
Chaplain (LTC-Retired)

RECRUITER'S CORNER

The recruiting season continues. Recruiting for the Greater Birmingham Chapter MOAA is close to taking first place in the State of Alabama. There are currently 162 members showing on the National MOAA Committee Module.



First Name (Preferred name) MI Last Name Rank / Grade Spouse

Member of National MOAA? ☐ Yes ☐ No Mem # (if known) _____

Branch of Service		Status	
<input type="checkbox"/> Army	<input type="checkbox"/> Marines	<input type="checkbox"/> Active Duty	<input type="checkbox"/> National Guard
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Navy	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> Former Member
<input type="checkbox"/> Coast Guard	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Reserve	<input type="checkbox"/> Surviving Spouse

Postal Address City State Zip Code Home Phone #:

Date of Birth Cell phone # Email Address

Member: _____

Spouse _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Local Membership (Greater Birmingham Chapter) runs by calendar year.

The remainder of your first calendar membership year is complimentary.

Following yearly membership dues: ☐ \$20/year ☐ \$35/2 years ☐ \$50/3 years)

Mail to:

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

Thank you for your support!

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

No report this month

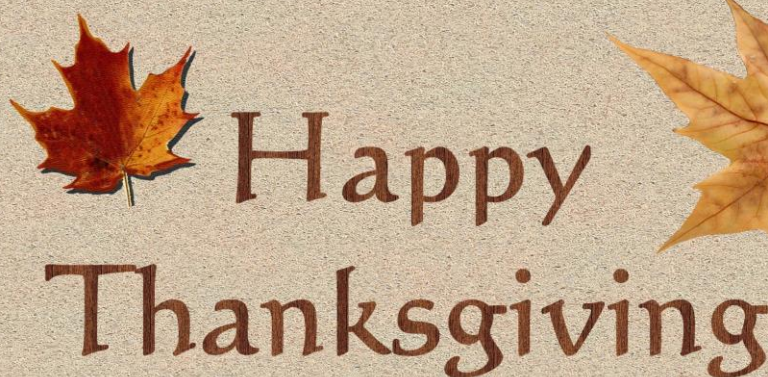
President's Message (continued)

We again, have several of our members supporting the Veterans Memorial Park brick dedication ceremony on Sunday, Nov 5th. If interested in attending, it begins at 1:30 PM and is always well done. The park is located just off the Liberty Park exit on I-459. Also, if you are interested in purchasing a brick for a loved one, the website is <https://www.alabamaveterans.org/stepstones-order-form>

Don't forget the annual Birmingham Veterans Day parade on Nov 11th. The largest and greatest in the country! Also, a day of memory for those who have gone before us.

November is the beginning of our chapter dues renewal season, so if you receive a renewal notice via mail or email, please respond. Your dues are important to allow us to keep supporting the local veteran community and we appreciate all your support.

Thanksgiving will come and go this coming month too, so everyone travel safely, enjoy family and more. Oh, and it's not too late to start your Christmas shopping. Look forward to seeing you all at the November meeting!



Happy
Thanksgiving

MILITARY SPOUSE'S CORNER



Hello dear friends,

I hope many of you were able to attend our fall luncheon and program on October 18. Our speaker, Patricia Anderson gave us some valuable information about VA benefits. Please reach out to her if you have any questions. Her contact information is as follows: 205-986-3977, patricia.a.anderson280@ctr@army.mil. Special thanks to Margie Argo for the beautiful decorations and to Jerri Barnhill for her inspiring blessing. I also thank Donna Martin for all her "behind the scenes" work and support.

As we look forward into the month of November, many thoughts come to mind. One is All Saints' Day. We think of all the saints in our lives who now rest from their labors. Another one is the celebration of our nation's veterans, both past and present. November 11 is the designated date for remembering our military. We ask God to protect them and give them courage, strength, and loyalty as they work to keep us safe. Of course, we think about Thanksgiving, where our memories go back to many family gatherings, often at our grandparents' home. We recall the delicious meals of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, cranberry, green beans, and the famous desserts of pumpkin pie, apple pie and cherry pie. Many of us start writing Christmas cards and begin Christmas shopping before stores get crowded.

For now, let's enjoy each day we have as we prepare for the days ahead. I wish you all a great November.

Sincerely,
Lynn M. Phifer,
Surviving Spouse Liaison

See pictures of Ladies Luncheon on page 11

GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mike Robinson
Ike Martin
Bill Bradley
Martha Killian
Mark Melanson
Monica Deason
Russ Frazer
Anne Hartline
Pamela Placke
Bill Aderholt
Joe Garner
Patricia Lehman
Bob Shinpaugh
Charlie Marvin
Ginny Lusk
Pat Fiol
Charles Knight

ID CARDS

If your ID card has an expiration date that is past or expires this month, you need to renew it ASAP. There are several locations in the Birmingham area, just google "military ID card renewal near me." 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.

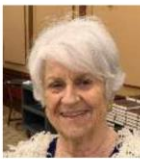
MOAA on-line photo directory

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 have 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)



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.

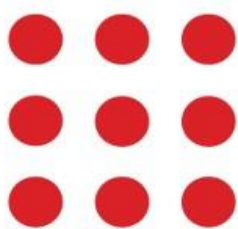
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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, USPHS commissioned officers and surviving spouses from all branches 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 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>

VETERAN'S CRISIS LINE



**Veterans
Crisis Line**

DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

Legislative Action Center

**How to register with MOAA's
Legislative Action Center:**



Four ways to get there:

Direct link: MOAA.quorum.us

Text "MOAA" to 1-855-547-6921

Go to: MOAA.org > Advocacy > Legislative Action Center

Or scan the QR code to the right with your phone:

Then follow the instructions on how to register.

Each of your devices, i.e., phone, laptop, iPad, must be registered separately. It's a great way to keep up with all

MOAA's advocacy issues, plus links to all your congressional representatives.

Link to MOAA's new Legislative Action Center and FAQ's:

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/advocacy/meet-moaas-new-legislative-action-center/>

LADIES LUNCHEON
OCTOBER 18, 2023

Lynn Phifer and
Speaker, Patricia Anderson



Trent Phifer sang



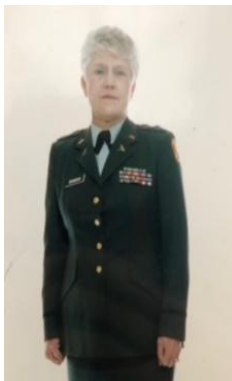
New member
Audrey Haines



Marie McDaniel was a guest of Donna
Martin and Mr. Scarecrow.



LTC Linda DeMarco
MOAA 2023 Veteran of the Year



LTC Linda DeMarco



Mess Tent down from
sandstorm in Saudia Arabia

Linda was born and raised in Birmingham, AL. She graduated from Woodlawn High School. and obtained her BS and MS degrees from Auburn University. In 1975 she was commissioned a 2LT in the Alabama Army National Guard. She served as CO of Food Service and Hospital Dietitian for the 109th Evacuation Hospital. She was deployed during the Desert Shield/Desert Storm, spending 6 months in the desert as the Hospital Dietitian, where she was responsible for a 400-bed evacuation hospital and 400 troop serving over 800 meals per day. Upon return to the states, her unit was disbanded, resulting in her reassignment to COSCOM and eventually the State Military Headquarters in Montgomery as State Food Service Officer. Linda retired in 2003 as a LTC with 28 years total service. In 2007 she retired from the Jefferson County Health Department, ending her career that began as a Public Health Nutritionist and leading to her retiring as the Director of General Services. Linda has remained active in military and community affairs by being actively involved in the Greater Birmingham Chapter of MOAA. She is also actively involved in many civic organizations, where she has served as the Chairman of the Jefferson County Delegation of the Alabama Silver Haired Legislation, representing, and advocating for protection of benefits for the aging population. In 2013 she was selected as Alabama Senior Citizen of the Year. Linda has two adult children and four grandchildren who are her “extracurricular” activity and help to keep her young.



Getting on plane to go to
Saudia Arabia

