Volume 118 Issue 10 October 2018

Officers' Call

Greater Birmingham Chapter
Military Officers Association of America

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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.

Greetings Members and Friends,

Anne Hartline and I were fortunate to attend the Southeast Atlantic Region Leadership Workshop in September. The Workshop was hosted by the Carolina Chapters and held in Greenville, SC. The purpose of the meeting was to share information, resource tools, and best practices to enable council and chapter leaders to grow and sustain strong chapters. The Alabama chapter leadership was a strong voice during the conference and shared many good ideas with other chapters. Likewise, we learned many new, innovated ideas from the Carolina Chapters that can help us with recruiting and advocacy for our servicemembers and retirees. A picture of the Alabama delegation with the MOAA President, Lt Gen Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret) is in this newsletter (page 6).

As we left the Carolina's, Hurricane Florence was hovering off the coast. Please pray for everyone who will be affected from this horrific storm.

Veterans Day is fast approaching, and it is my pleasure to announce that LTC Tom Ruffing, USA (Ret) has been selected as the Chapters' Veteran of the Year for 2018. A narrative of the accomplishments of Tom's military and civilian careers and his contribution to veterans is included in the newsletter. Tom will be recognized at the World Peace Luncheon on November 11th.

Tickets for both the National Veterans Day Dinner and the World Peace Luncheon are available now. Contact J.D. Crawford at 205-999-7961 to order tickets.

The next meeting is on October 4th; social hour begins at 6:00pm. Hope to see you all there!

Respectfully,

Wes

(Important Dates continued on page 5)

Veteran of the Year for 2018

LTC Thomas (Tom) Ruffing, USA (Ret)

LTC Ruffing served in the U.S. Army for 25 years, 1964 – 1989.

After commissioning through Officers Candidate School, Tom served as Platoon Leader Company A, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade. The 196th Light Infantry Brigade was a cadre brigade with no soldiers. Tom was responsible to train his platoon recruits and prepare them for deployment to Vietnam. Tom's platoon participated in combat operations in both I and III Corp areas. After a year in Vietnam, all soldiers in Tom's platoon returned home safely. After serving in the United States for a year, Tom returned to Vietnam and assumed command of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 196th Infantry Brigade, the same company he had served as a platoon leader in his previous tour. Tom led numerous airmobile and ground combat operations and was wounded several times. After command, Tom was selected as the Senior Aide-de-Camp for Major General Lloyd Ramsey, Commanding General, 23rd Infantry Division (Americal). Tom and MG Ramsey were involved in a helicopter crash in March 1970. They were recovered by Marine Rescue Experts 18 hours after the crash and evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Tom continued to serve the U.S. Army in Saudi Arabia, Ft. Greely. Alaska, and other stateside posts, and retired in 1989 while serving as Chief of Training, 3rd U.S. Army.

Tom received a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Nebraska and attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

A highly decorated officer, Tom's military awards include the Combat Infantry Badge (CIB), Parachute Badge, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with V (valor) with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Defense Meritorious Service Award, Meritorious Service Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal, 10 Air Medals and numerous other meritorious awards.

Tom was Vice President and President of the Greater Birmingham Chapter, Military Officer Association of America (MOAA). During Tom's tenure as President, the Chapter was awarded the MOAA five-star Level of Excellence Award and built a strong relationship with the Birmingham VA Hospital, ROTC, and JROTC detachments.

LTC Ruffing was married to the late Jane (Johnnie) Smith Ruffing, together they had two daughters, Allison Elizabeth and Lee Ann. LTC Ruffing is married to Sue Ellen Nelley of Hughes Springs, TX.

Thursday, October 04, 2018 *Social Hour:* 1800 hrs. *Dinner:* 1830 hrs.

- **Cost:** $26 per person.
  Payment for meal is due at the door (checks are preferred).
- **Location:** Danberry at Inverness, 235 Inverness Center Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242.
- **Reservations:** Contact CAPT Doug Markham, 205-420-2631 or dgmarkham3143@gmail.com **(please note new treasurer, new number and new email)** by 1200 Noon on Monday October 1st to make or cancel your reservation. Note: Your reservation is not complete until you have received a confirmation call or email.
- **Menu:** Herb roasted lamb chops over mash potatoes with asparagus, carrot, cherry tomato blend topped with masala reduction. Greek salad and dessert cheesecake brulee
- **Cash Bar**: $5 (wine and mixed drinks); $3 (beer); Drink tickets available at registration desk.

Driving Instructions - Danberry at Inverness, 235 Inverness Center Drive, Birmingham, AL 35242

- **Traveling from I-65** (South or North): Take the I-459 interchange toward Atlanta. Proceed north on I-459 and take Exit 19 onto Highway 280 toward Childersburg. Travel approx. 2.2 miles on Highway 280 and turn right onto Inverness Center Drive (Fresh Market shopping center on right). Travel approx. 1/2 mile and turn left into Danberry at Inverness.
- **Traveling South on I-459**: Take Exit 19 onto Highway 280 toward Childersburg. Travel approx. 2.2 miles on Highway 280 and turn right onto Inverness Center Drive (Fresh Market shopping center on right). Travel approx. 1/2 mile and turn left into Danberry at Inverness.
- **Traveling West on Highway 280**: Turn left onto Inverness Center Drive (Fresh Market shopping center on the left). Travel approx. 1/2 mile and turn left into Danberry at Inverness.

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

October Speaker

GUEST SPEAKER: Mr. Lyndon W. Smith

Our speaker this month is Mr. Lyndon W. Smith. He's going to talk to us about the "New Dimensions in Residential Fire Safety." Mr. Smith introduced this educational program for seniors in 1983, and he and his staff of retired fire chiefs and fire marshals have kept the program current in accordance with changes in public standards and fire detection technology.

Mr. Smith is a graduate of Yale University. He is a former US Army National Guard Officer. He is the retired President of the Firewatch Corporation and has come to share with us this month a thirty-year legacy in residential fire safety.

Chaplain's Corner

October is almost here. For us living in Alabama, that means that fall is here and cooler weather is getting near! I am sure that you, like me, are tired of this extended hot and humid weather; pretty soon many of us will be raking leaves every weekend. By the way, which is better? Mowing the lawn, or raking leaves? I personally prefer watching college football to either of those two choices. As many of you know, the third weekend in October is a very important date.

We also celebrate three other significant dates on the October calendar: For grandparents especially, **HALLOWEEN is on Thursday, October 31st.** I put it in bold so that you will remember the date and buy plenty of the good candy early. And if you really want to let yourself go, there is a Full Moon exactly one week prior to Halloween. Also, for those who still are working somewhere, Tuesday**,** October 16th is National Boss Day. I'm not really sure what to do on that day…maybe my boss will take me to lunch (or am I supposed to take him to lunch?) Who comes up with these holidays anyway?

October is also a time when we get fresh apples from all over the U.S. Fresh fruit is always so good. So I want to remind everyone of a wonderful verse in Galatians. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (yes, even on Hwy 280); against such things there is no law. Let's try and be more fruitful this month.

If you know of any of our members who are under the weather or have suffered a loss, please let me or Anne Hartline know. Now go out and celebrate October! May God continue to bless you, your family, and the United States of America.

Mac Chandler, LTC, US Army, Ret.

Recruiter's Corner

Recruiter's Corner

Our Chapter website www.MOAABirmingham.org is LIVE! There is a current calendar of events, newsletter archive and many other useful features, so please check it out and let us know what you think. Like and follow us on Facebook while you're at it; when on Facebook, just do a search for "Greater Birmingham MOAA" and click "Like: or "Follow".

New members and recruiting

We sent out a mass mailing membership campaign this past month to over 400 prospective members residing in the Birmingham area. Thanks for the help of Donna Martin, Wes Cox, Pat Marvin and Robert Williams. So hopefully we will see some new faces in our monthly meetings soon. Please be sure to introduce yourself to any new members and make them feel welcome.

Chapter dues is on a calendar year

Chapter membership renewal notifications will be sent out in early November. The good news is many members renewed for 2 or even 3 years last year, so fewer notices will be needed. We should be set-up to accept chapter dues with a credit or debit card by then through the National MOAA website; details will be provided with the individual renewal notices. If you are NOT a Life National MOAA member, please check that your National MOAA membership is current also. It is separate and a requirement to be a member in good standing with our local Chapter.

Semper Fi,
Don Lehman, LTC, USMCR (retired)
Membership Chair
don.lehman1@gmail.com
cell: 404-441-3882

`HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Margie Argo	16	
Albert Folcher	30	
Doug Haviland	7	
Preston Huddleston	1	
Dorsey Ingram	31	
Reuben Melton	27	(91)
Carolyn Robinson	3	
Sue Ruffing	1	
Danny Sample	26	
Bill Satterfield	9	
Emma Vaiton	13	(98)
Angel Vazquez	27	
Robert Williams	13	

Notes for your calendar:

Continued from President (page 1)

November 4 – Alabama Veterans Memorial Park Shepstone Dedication

November 11 – National Veterans Day Dinner

November 12 – World Peace Luncheon (Chapter Veteran of the Year recognized)

November 12 – National Veterans Day Parade

December 15 – Wreaths Around America

The Alabama Group

Legislative Update

Midterm Elections Could Bring a Big Shift in Power (by James F. Naughton Jr, MOAA)

Elections hold certain electricity for MOAA. Both midterm and general elections pose strategic challenges and opportunities. While the nation loses experienced lawmakers, many of whom understand the unique commitment and challenges that come with military service, our association finds new champions for our legislative concerns.

Regardless of partisan power, one thing is certain: There will be big changes in store for the military and veteran communities. Those changes could mean new health care fees, changes to pay raises, or overhauls to other earned benefits.

The potential shift in power also means MOAA - and its members - must be ready to continue educating legislators and staff, to maintain a base of support, so we can answer when an opportunity to advance our legislative agenda knocks.

MOAA's government relations' team is here to monitor our allies and opposition on Capitol Hill. We recognize being a veteran doesn't automatically make a legislator an ally. Some of our biggest antagonists over the years have been veterans; conversely, some of the biggest supporters of MOAA's issues have never worn a uniform. MOAA does not take any legislative relationship for granted. We know starting and nurturing relationships on all sides requires diligence, vigilance, and teamwork from you.

With that in mind, let's look at what we know right now.

The Senate

With a narrow majority in the Senate, expect a hot contest. Democrats have more vulnerable seats to defend this cycle - several in states that voted for President Donald Trump in 2016.

While there is a slim opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to share power, the likely outcome is that one party will have a majority. The majority-winning party will control the trajectory of legislation, confirm appointments, and draft budgets. In the event of an evenly divided Senate, Vice President Mike Pence will have to cast the tie-breaking vote. Even with the GOP in control, Pence cast nine tie-breaking votes in his first year in office. Since the 1870s, no vice president has done this more than nine times during his tenure.

Potential for Change

Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC)

The death of Sen. John McCain, chair of SASC, will be felt profoundly. He served on SASC for 31 years. John Kyl, a former senator, has been chosen to fill McCain's seat. Kyl served in the House from 1987 to 1995 and in the Senate from 1995 to 2013. While in the House, he served on the Armed Services Committee. It remains to be seen if Kyl will take McCain's SASC seat.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC)

Three senators on SVAC face tough reelections: Ranking Member Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.), and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.). Tester was instrumental in crafting legislation allowing veterans to receive VA-funded health care in the private sector, expanding caregiver support programs, and reforming the VA appeals process - all of which MOAA supports.

(Continued on page 6)

Legislative Update (Continued from page 5)

Veterans

The Senate will lose two veterans in addition to McCain: Former Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) has left and now serves as U.S. Attorney General, and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) resigned in April, citing health concerns. The three senators take with them a combined 96 years of policy expertise.

The House

Although their party controls the majority of all three branches of government, at least eight GOP chairs of the House's 20 committees will retire this cycle, including House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.). Six of the eight departing GOP committee leaders would be forced out of their roles in 2019 even if they weren't retiring because the House Republican caucus has rules limiting committee leaders' terms to give younger members a chance to ascend the leadership ranks. Losing a committee gavel means giving up a lot of power, which might be one reason 75 percent of these leaders are retiring.

Potential for Change

House Armed Services Committee (HASC)

HASC will lose at least eleven members as they retire, seek other office, lost reelection, or resigned from office. If Democrats flip the House in November, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), current chair of HASC, would hand off his role. Thornberry has been one of MOAA's strongest supporters in trying to eliminate the widows' tax on military survivors. Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), currently the ranking member on the committee, would be the presumptive chair.

The Military Personnel Subcommittee, which oversees military pay and health care, will lose three of its five Democratic members to retirement.

House Veterans Affairs' Committee (HVAC)

There will be at least three new members of the HVAC: Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-Minn.) is leaving Congress to run for governor, Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas) is running for Senate, and Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.) is retiring.

Walz, the highest-ranking enlisted member to serve in Congress, was instrumental in passing the Forever GI Bill.

Veterans

In total, 18 veterans will have left the House in 2018: nine are retiring, five have resigned, and four are running for other office. Of the five members who resigned, three left to take jobs in the administration, and two left Congress amid allegations of misconduct.

The departures mark a continuing trend of fewer veterans in Congress. While military service should not be a prerequisite for elected office, MOAA has seen that having a working knowledge of the sacrifices of service often leads to more productive dialogue and better outcomes.

ALABAMA VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

Veterans, both living and deceased, will be celebrated on Sunday, Nov. 4, 2018, with activities at the Alabama Veterans Memorial Park. The public is invited to this patriotic tribute, taking place from 12:15 pm until 3:30 pm, at the park, which is located near the Liberty Parkway exit of I-459. There is no admission fee and all activities are outdoors.

Starting at 12 noon, guests will be able to view the Regiment of Columns, where they will see stories, letters, artwork, and inscriptions about Alabama veterans and the state's 24 Medal of Honor recipients. Next to the columns is the Hall of Honor, where guests can see the names of the 11,000 Alabamians who lost their lives in service. The Bob Moore Band will perform starting around 12:15 pm.

The patriotic tribute will begin at 1 pm, during which Major General David Burford, US Army (RET), will speak. Burford served during Operation Enduring Freedom and will soon take over as chairman of the board for Vettes 4 Vets, a non-profit organization supporting veterans.

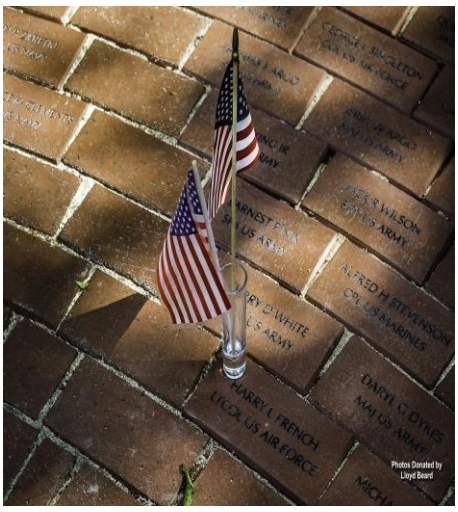
At 2 pm, the newest Stepstones installed at the park will be dedicated during a special ceremony honoring those whose names are on the engraved bricks. StepStones are permanently installed at the park to honor any veteran, living or deceased, and are dedicated twice a year.

The "Faces of the Price of Freedom" exhibit honors Alabama military who have given their lives in service since Sept. 11, 2001. Sponsored by the Blue Star Salute organization, the exhibit will be on display throughout the event.

Free shuttles will be provided from the parking area to the park, and seating is provided at the event. For more information, go to alabamaveterans.org.

Color Guard

by Lynn M-H Andrews



Stepsons by Lloyd Beard

Greater Birmingham Chapter of
Military Officers Association of America
Ladies Luncheon
for
Surviving Spouses
Female Officers
Spouses of Living Members

Wednesday, October 24, 2018
10:30 am
Hoover Country Club
3140 Club Drive, Hoover, AL 35226

"Enhance Life with Community Resources"
"MOAA Legislative Updates on Benefits"

Your check will be your reservation.
Make check payable to: GBC MOAA
Mail to: Donna Martin
140 Courtside Drive
Birmingham, AL 35242
(205) 408-4761
donnamaemartin@aol.com

Cost: $20 Reservation deadline: October 17, 2018

Armed Forces Officers Wives Club

Please join us October 11, 2018
At
The Club- Inn Room
At 11:30 am
Speaker
Jim Reed
Owner, The Museum of Fond Memories
"***A LOOK AT THE BOOKSTORES BOOKLOVERS BOOKAUTHORS AND BOOKIES OF BIRMINGHAM***"

To make reservations, please contact
Jane Galik before October 5, 2018
ladyg8r74@gmail.com
205-664-8163

The purpose of this organization is to foster friendship among the wives of active, retired alive and deceased officers of the Armed Forces, and female officers to promote cultural and educational needs and provide group fellowship.

Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month from September through May at various locations.

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 are available for $8.50 each
through J.D. Crawford.

The nametags are black lettering on white, and they are approximately business card size with magnetic backs.

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.

Make checks payable to James D. Crawford.

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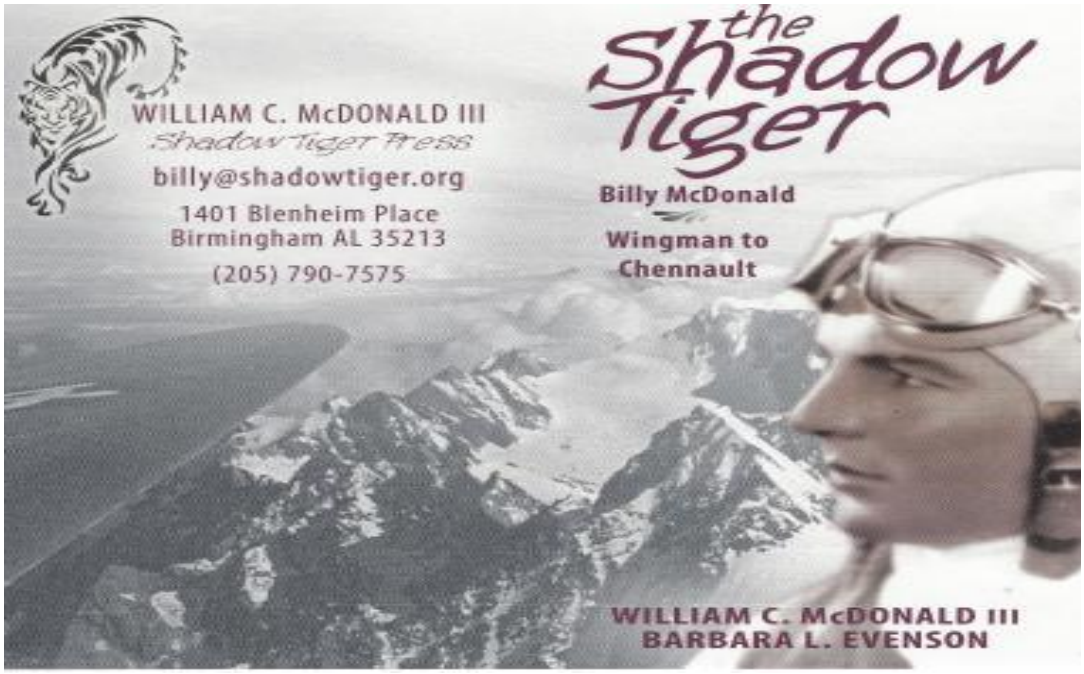

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Lt. Col. (Ret) Mac Chandler, Family Service Counselor

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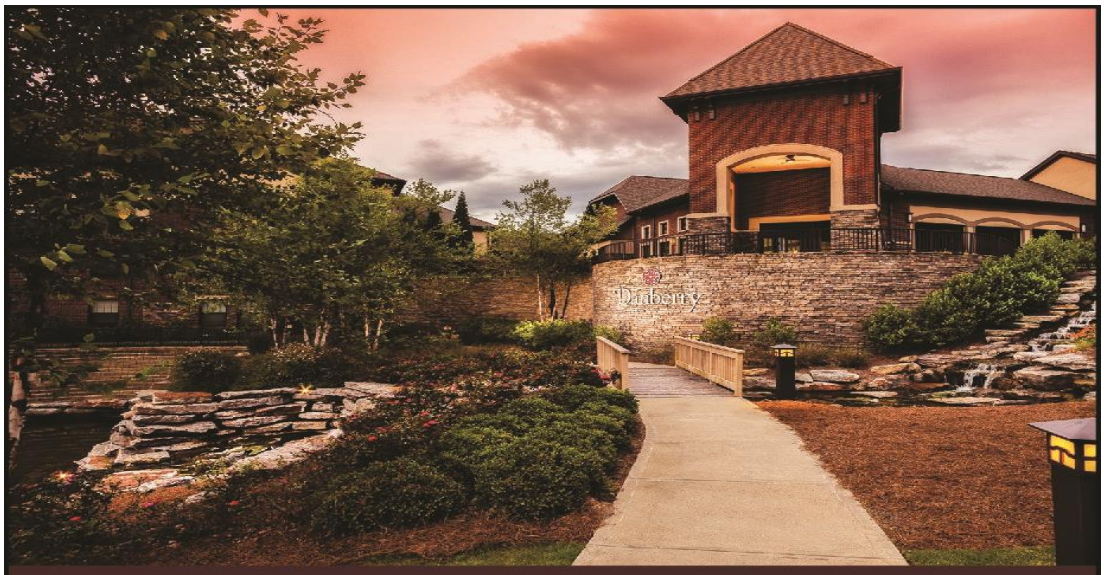

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don.lehman1@gmail.com

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MOAA™
Military Officers Association of America
Greater Birmingham Chapter
P.O. Box 530153
Birmingham, Alabama 35253

Our upcoming dinner meetings will be 4 October 2018 and 01November 2018
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