



### So much for that idea!

No, unfortunately we are probably not going to have a live meeting now until at least March, thanks to the Omicron. Patricia and I both tested positive the day before Christmas after unbeknownst to us, exposed to a couple of positive testing grandkids the week before. Quarantined for the holidays was no fun here. Hopefully we now have super immunity though, with the vax, boosted and anti-bodies. Symptoms were very mild to none at all, so I'm sure the positive case numbers are much higher than currently being reported.

We will have a guest Zoom speaker for our February 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter meeting. Danny Cooper will speak about the American Village in Montevallo (<http://www.americanyillage.org/>); I think you will find it a very interesting and informative talk. A separate MailChimp email will be sent out soon with the zoom link and details.

I'd like to welcome Dan Phifer LTC USA retired our new Chapter Chaplain. And a big thanks to Mac Chandler who has served as our loyal Chaplain for many years. Please read Dan's first Chaplain's Corner in this newsletter.

If you haven't renewed your Chapter membership for 2022, please do so as soon as possible. Your membership is important as MOAA continues to fight for all service veterans' benefits.

Patricia and I wish you all the very best of everything in the new year. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Respectfully,  
Don



# Officers' Call

- President* Don Lehman, LTC, USMC (Ret)
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- 2<sup>nd</sup> VP* Michael Walker, LTC, USA (Ret)
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- 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).

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Greetings to you, my fellow members of the Birmingham Chapter of MOAA. I have been a life member of MOAA since 1995 and never have I had the opportunity to be in a local group. Thank you, Mac Chandler, for writing such fine "Chaplain" articles. I have read them all for the last year and appreciate your expression of faith in God and the Scriptures.

My wife, Lynn and I have been doing daily devotions together for many years. It is a good habit to take up. When we have been apart for any reason, we still do our devotions even miles or countries apart. It has been a little way of keeping God the center of our marriage. We use a devotional booklet which lets me get God's Word from another "God Fearing" writer.

The devotional for today was entitled "Extravagant". The text was 1 John 3:1. *"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so, we are."*

The story of Mary using the *Extravagant* gift of expensive ointment for Jesus' Feet was referenced in John 12:1-8. She was honoring an even more extravagant gift: that the Creator of the world became a man who loved her family, raised her brother, Lazarus, from the dead, and visited her home. She didn't know about Jesus' impending death and resurrection. If any gift was extravagant, it was the gift of God's Son, Immanuel, as our Savior.

He gives eternal life. He says, *"You are my children."* His love for us is and always shall be extravagant.

A Prayer: *"How can it be that you call us Your children? Yet You do. Thank You Father. In His Name. Amen."*

Dan Phifer

## SAVE THE DATE



Ladies Luncheon

March 16, 2022

Invitations will go out in February.

Details will be in the March 2022 MOAA GBC Newsletter.

### Note:

We are planning based on predictions from UAB infectious disease physicians and the CDC that our COVID-19 positive numbers will decrease dramatically by our March luncheon. We will adhere to recommendations by these health professionals regarding safe gatherings.

## FEBRUARY SPEAKER

### **Mr. Danny Cooper will be guest speaker for the February 3<sup>rd</sup> 3:00 pm Zoom meeting.**

Mr. Cooper will share the history of American Village and programs of interest to Veterans.

Mr. Cooper is the nephew of Marine Col. Carl Cooper, who recently passed at 101 years. Danny earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Montevallo, with a double major in Political Science and History, and a master's degree in Education, School Administration. He served on The University of Montevallo Board of Trustees from 2008-2020. Danny is a successful realtor, and was the Executive Vice-President/Chief Operating Office, Alabama Association of Realtors from 1989-2012. Danny is also a very successful business consultant, lobbyist, and fundraiser, and the "getter done" guy in Alabama and national politics. His impressive achievements and accolades are too numerous to mention. Danny has been a member of The American Village Citizenship Trust Board of Directors since 2013, and will share the history of American Village and programs of interest to Veterans.

The zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88614993443>

## IN MEMORIAM

### **During 2021, we lost the following members:**

Lt Cmdr. George Williams

Col Carl Cooper

CDR Preston Huddleston

COL Richard Ballintine

CWO4 Lawrence Brassell

Surviving Spouse:

Ida Pack

Carol Beaty

Eleanor Cushman

Margaret Gray





**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

(Visit Legislative Action at <http://www.moaa.org>)

### **MOAA's 2022 Legislative Priorities By MOAA Government Relations Staff**

For 2022, the momentum established over the previous year to carry efforts into the second session of Congress continues. Continuity and consistency of effort are paramount to success. There are other issues not listed that are also being worked by the staff of lobbyists. The priorities are shaped throughout the year depending on concurrent successes or emerging issues that warrant an all-hands approach. The following list is what the legislative priority focus is in 2022:

- Sustain pay raises and adequate BAH for the troops and COLA raises for retirees.
- Ensure the Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Service continue to receive pay during a government shutdown.
- Protect the value of the military health care benefit.
- Protect the Military Health System pharmacy benefit and achieve flexibility in TRICARE pharmacy copays.
- Address barriers to accessing care within the MHS, including TRICARE coverage gaps and mental health care access challenges.
- Protect family support programs, and ensure military-provided services (housing, PCS, childcare, youth programs, financial counseling) are readily available and meet standards for quality and costs.
- Achieve equity of benefits, protections, and administrative support for Guard/Reserve members consistent with their active-duty counterparts.
- Sustain Veterans Health Administration (VHA) foundational missions and services.
- Reform the presumptive process to support veterans claiming service-connected disabilities for toxic exposures.
- Achieve concurrent receipt of service-earned retirement pay and VA disability pay.
- Protect full military honors and burial at Arlington National Cemetery for those currently eligible.
- Improve survivors' benefits.
- Support a quality transition experience from active duty to veteran status for all servicemembers.
- Recognize the pandemic continues to affect the lives of our servicemembers.

### **Star Act Support: More Lawmakers Join the Fight for Concurrent Receipt By Mark Belinsky**

The Major Richard Star Act – a bill that would end an unjust offset faced by tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans – has grown co-sponsors in recent weeks. Co-sponsors for The Major Richard Star Act recently grew to 55 in the Senate and 151 in the House. According to the DoD Office of the Actuary, the Star Act would support over 48,000 combat-injured veterans with concurrent receipt of medical retired pay and VA disability. These individuals, often seriously disabled, are subject to an offset where their medical retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of VA disability received. In some cases, their retirement pay is completely reduced. Retired pay is for completed years of service paid by DoD, while disability compensation is for lifelong injury paid by the VA. Two different payments for two different purposes. To reduce retired pay because of a disability is an injustice. Advocacy for concurrent receipt and the Star Act is part of a larger campaign MOAA has pursued for many years. In 2004, MOAA and TMC secured concurrent receipt for retirees who served at least 20 years and have a VA disability rating at 50% or higher. Left behind after that 2004 change are 20-year retirees with a 40% disability rating and below, and those who were medically retired under Chapter 61 with less than 20 years of service. MOAA and TMC advocate for concurrent receipt for all, and the Star Act is part of an incremental strategy.

**Past Due on Chapter Dues Renewal**

The chapter renewal season is over, but continuous membership is available for those who complete the renewal process before the end of February 2022. Thank you to those who already renewed.

If you have not renewed yet for CY 2022, this is the last chance before losing membership.

You may conveniently renew your local Birmingham chapter dues online at –

<https://chapterdues.moaa.org>

The online payment option is via credit card. MOAA's website navigation is straightforward and clutter-free. First time users will likely find the online chapter dues renewal option to be the least hassle. It takes about 3-4 minutes to complete the entire process.

1 Year = \$20  
2 Years = \$35  
3 Years = \$50

The other option available is to mail a check or money order to –

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

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

## MILITARY SPOUSE'S CORNER



A couple of highlights from the [Surviving Spouse Advisory Council \(SSAC\)](#) activities in 2021.

**Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter.** Membership continues to grow, with 177 members from 35 states. The chapter now meets monthly, on the third Tuesday of each month. Every other month is a business meeting with a speaker and the other months are an informal social gathering to exchange information and ideas. Attendance varies, but usually includes 30 at the social meetings and about 60 at a more formal meeting. Contact Donna Martin at [donnamaemartin@aol.com](mailto:donnamaemartin@aol.com) if you are interested in participating in this group.

**MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook Group.** [This group](#) has over 600 members and provides updated information on important surviving spouse issues, especially regarding the Surviving Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset. This has been a useful exchange of information on current issues.



## GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

### 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 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](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.



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**Donald Lehman**

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**Consulting Petroleum Geologist**

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Tuesday 4–10PM

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