



Lot going on in November

There is a lot going on in November, not only honoring those who have or are serving, but some delicious holidays too! We will have Col Jay Skinner speaking to us on November 7th on the Alabama National Guard, so put it on your calendar and hope to see you there. It was great to get an update on UAB's ROTC program last month and to meet some of the great young men and women who will be serving our country soon. Our MOAA ladies had another successful luncheon on October 15th and thank you again to Lynn Phifer and her wonderful ladies committee for putting these on twice a year.

We have some important events coming up, the Alabama Memorial Park brick dedication ceremony on Sunday, November 3rd, which we support with volunteers and the annual Veteran's Day dinner on November 10th, honoring our veteran of the year, LTC Dan Phifer and others. These are both grand events and hope that you can attend.

We will also be collecting for Toys for Tots again this year at our November meeting. We will be making a cash donation from the chapter; so, if you would like to be included, please bring a check or cash to the meeting. If unable to attend the meeting and you would like to support, mail a check, made out to "GBC MOAA", with Toys for Tots noted on the check, then send to our PO box (see address on last page herein). Thanks.

Enjoy the pleasant fall weather and hopefully the football season too! Come see us in November. Also put the December 5th meeting on your calendar; we will be having pianist/vocalist Ray Reach again this year, entertaining us with holiday songs. He is very good so don't miss it.

And of course last but not least, be sure to cast your vote on November 5th. It's going to be a close one, so come to our MOAA meeting on the 7th to celebrate or commiserate!

Respectfully,
Don & Patricia

Officers' Call

- 1st VP: Harold Coghlan, CW4 USA (Ret)
- 2nd VP: Michael Walker, LTC, USA (Ret)
- Secretary: Margie Argo, LTC, USAR (Ret)
- Treasurer: Donna Martin
- Past Pres: Wes Cox, Col, USA (Ret)
- Director: Mark Melanson, Col USA (Ret)
- Director: Jeff Newton, BG, ANG (Ret)
- Director: Doug Markham, CPT, USN (Ret)
- Director: Vacant
- Chaplain: Dan Phifer, LTC, USA (Ret)
- Legislative
- Affairs: Mark Rubino, LDCR, USN (Ret)
- Personal
- Affairs: Anne Hartline
- Surviving
- Spouse
- Liaison: Lynn Phifer
- Newsletter: Jimmy Langley, 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.



MEETING
NOVEMBER 7, 2024

Danberry at Inverness
235 Inverness Center Drive
Birmingham, Al 35242
205-443-9500
Social 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:30 pm

MENU

Brown Sugar Pork Loin
Sweet Potato Casserole
Tossed Garden Salad
Rolls
Banana Pudding

Dinner cost will be \$25 per person.

Reservations must be made by noon Monday, Nov 4, 2024.

Preferred method:

RSVP and pay by credit/debit card at:

[November 7, 2024 - Reservation and Payment - Cheddar Up](#)

or alternate method:

Email / call Donna Martin at contact@moaabirmingham.org or 205-876-6274.



SPEAKER: Col Thomas "Jay" Skinner, AL Army NG

Col. Skinner is a 1990 graduate of the University of Alabama with a B.S. in Commerce and Business Administration with a Major in Real Estate, and he is a 1993 graduate of Cumberland School of Law at Samford University. Col. Skinner was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1993.

In addition to his civilian practice, he is a Colonel in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, serving as the Staff Judge Advocate of the 167th Theater Sustainment Command, Alabama Army National Guard, where he oversees all legal matters for the command. Colonel Skinner is also the CBRN liaison officer with the Alabama National Guard's State Partnership Program partner nation of Romania, and he recently completed a two-year term as President of the National Guard Association of Alabama. Colonel Skinner attended the U.S. Army War College as a member of the Academic Class of 2024 where he earns a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies.

In 2013, Colonel Skinner deployed to Southwest Asia where he served in Kuwait and Qatar in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Col. Skinner is a resident of Mountain Brook, Alabama, but he has also spent over 50 years coming to his family's home on Lookout Mountain in Mentone, Alabama.

RECRUITER'S CORNER

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.

To join or renew, please complete the application below or join/renew online at:
<https://www.moaabirmingham.org/membership/>

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Here is a story by Ruth Bensen called "The Piano Lesson".

Wishing to encourage her young son's progress on the piano, a mother took the small boy to a concert featuring a renowned pianist. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through the door marked "NO ADMITTANCE."

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that her son was missing. The curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive grand piano on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Then, leaning over, the great pianist reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child and he added a running obbligato. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was mesmerized.

That's the way it was with God. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. We try our best, but the results aren't exactly *graceful flowing music*. But with the hand of the Master, our life's work truly can be beautiful. Next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen carefully. You can hear the voice of the Master whispering in your ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Feel His loving arms around you. Know that His strong hands are playing the concerto of your life. Remember, God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called. He'll always be there to love and guide you on to great things. Keep the faith and keep playing. Together, you and the Master will make beautiful music.

**Blessings,
Chaplain Dan Phifer
U.S. Army Retired**

MOAA speakers for 2024:

- **November 7** – Col Thomas "Jay" Skinner, AL Army NG, topic, TBD
- **December 5** – Holiday program. Ray Reach, vocalist/pianist.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ensuring Veterans Continue to be Provided Full Military Burial Honors - Due to capacity concerns, in 2020, the Army proposed changes to the eligibility for in-ground burial and above ground inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), reducing eligibility for in-ground burial with full military honors to those awarded a Silver Star and above or a Purple Heart. In response, the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act (H.R. 1413), was introduced in the House by Reps. Lisa McClain (R-Mich.) and Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.) to preserve the option for full military honors now available at ANC. The legislation would authorize designating the next national cemetery location with equivalent honors to continue these benefits, rather than reducing eligibility at ANC.

Expanding America's National Cemetery Act of 2023 - This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs, before Arlington National Cemetery reaches capacity, to expand or otherwise modify an existing national cemetery to ensure that full military honors are provided in a specified manner. The Act would 1) ensure veterans continue to be provided full military honors, 2) establish a report on ways to increase cemetery capacity, and 3) review internment criteria at ANC.

"Military honors serve to comfort the grieving and instill pride in families who witness our nation's final respects for their loved ones," said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret) "MOAA is proud to support the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act and the steadfast work from Representatives McClain and Houlahan to ensure we keep our promise to our veterans and sustain this honor for future servicemembers. Continuing to honor service and sacrifice is essential to maintaining trust and increasing personal participation in our nation's defense."

Please ask your House Member to support the *Expanding America's National Cemetery Act*:

<https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/43785/>

Increasing Veteran Representation in Congress - During this era of decreasing trust in the U.S. Congress, MOAA is shining a light on the fact that veteran representation in Congress has declined more than 50% in the past 50 years. In the early 1970's, more than 70% of Congress were veterans, whereas today veterans make up only 18% of Congress. Numerous studies have also shown that during this same period, Congress has become more polarized and partisan. Not surprisingly, a recent Gallup survey shows that public trust in Congress has declined at virtually the same rate during this period.

Illustrated in the October 2024 issue of *Military Officer* magazine, "a recent study published by the Center for Effective Lawmaking suggests veteran members are 35% more effective than their nonveteran colleagues when it comes to introducing and passing legislation. Perhaps that's because veterans are more likely to engage across the aisle. Of the top 20 House representatives on the Lugar Center's Bipartisan Index, six have military experience. The same holds true for two of the top 10 in the Senate."

For more information on this issue and opportunity, visit <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/wanted-more-veterans-in-congress/>.

To see where each member of Congress ranks on the Lugar Center's Bipartisan Index, visit

<https://www.thelugarcenter.org/ourwork-Bipartisan-Index.html>.

Please visit the MOAA Legislative Action Center for information on these and other issues and how you can help make a difference for our service members and veterans: <https://moaa.quorum.us/>.

LCDR Mark Rubino, USN (Ret)

**Legislative
Action Center**



Four ways to get there:

Direct link: [MOAA.quorum.us](https://moaa.quorum.us)

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

Go to: [MOAA.org](https://www.moaa.org) > Advocacy > Legislative Action Center

Or scan the QR code to the left 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/>



MILITARY SPOUSE'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

Would you like to live longer? Read on!

Harvard scientists have found another secret to longevity. Their research shows that being "grateful" can lead to a longer life.

This study was completed in July 2024 and published online by JAMA Psychiatry.

What a powerful claim for the month of November, when we celebrate Thanksgiving Day!

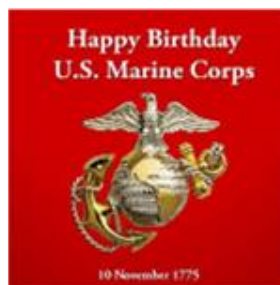
Counting our blessings is connected to feeling better emotionally. We also enjoy social well-being and better quality of sleep. The research started in 2016 with 49,000 women (average age 79) who answered questions about being thankful about various aspects of life. The study was observational and doesn't prove that gratitude extends life, but it does show that gratitude brings joy.

Give it a try! Each day write down three things you are thankful for. It can be large, such as a friendship or something small like the beautiful fall leaves. We are thankful year-round for the many blessings God gives us daily. We are especially grateful in the month of November when we set aside the fourth Thursday as the holiday the Pilgrims started in 1620 when they left Plymouth, England and arrived at Cape Cod Massachusetts. May we enjoy our Thanksgiving Day this year with a delicious turkey dinner and time with family and friends. Be thankful!

Sincerely,
Lynn M. Phifer,
Surviving Spouses Liaison

"The older I get, the better I used to be." – Lee Trevino, Professional Golfer.

"Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard there is nothing you can do about it." - Golda Meir.



249TH

GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

November Birthdays

Martha Killian	10
Bill Bradley	10
Mark	
Melanson	10
Anne Hartline	14
Pamela Placke	15
Bill Aderholt	16
Joe Garner	16
Patricia	
Lehman	20
Bob	
Shinpaugh	26
Charlie Marvin	28
Pat Fiol	30

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: donnaamartin@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)



That's why they call it "practicing" medicine.

"As I suspected, there's nothing wrong with you. But I'd like to keep ordering tests till something turns up."



The History of Veterans Day in Birmingham



Birmingham, Alabama, holds a special place in the history of Veterans Day. The city's connection to this important national holiday dates back to 1947, when a World War II veteran named Raymond Weeks organized the first "National Veterans Day" celebration. This event was held on November 11, which was then known as Armistice Day, a day originally set aside to honor those who fought in World War I.

Raymond Weeks, often referred to as the "Father of Veterans Day," envisioned a day that would honor all veterans, not just those who served in World War I. His efforts led to the first Veterans Day parade in Birmingham, which included various festivities to pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of veterans from all branches of the military.

Weeks' initiative gained national attention, and in 1954, Congress passed a bill to rename Armistice Day as Veterans Day, a change that was signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. This transformation marked a significant shift in how the United States honors its veterans, expanding the recognition to include all who have served in the armed forces.

Birmingham's annual Veterans Day parade has since become the nation's longest-running celebration of its kind. Each year, the city hosts a grand parade that draws participants and spectators from across the country. The event not only honors veterans but also serves as a reminder of the city's pivotal role in the establishment of this national holiday.

Raymond Weeks' legacy continues to be celebrated in Birmingham, with a granite monument in Linn Park dedicated to his contributions. His vision and dedication have ensured that Veterans Day remains a day of remembrance and gratitude for all who have served in the military.

As Birmingham continues to honor its veterans with pride and respect, the city's history with Veterans Day stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of those who have fought for freedom and peace.

"At age 20, we worry about what others think of us... at age 40, we don't care what they think of us... at age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all." - [Ann Landers](#).



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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

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

Branch of Service Status
___ Army ___ Marines ___ Active Duty ___ National Guard
___ Air Force ___ Navy ___ Retired ___ Former Member
___ Coast Guard ___ Other ___ Reserve ___ 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!



Meeting November 7, 2024