



## 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*
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- Director: *Mark Melanson, Col USA (Ret)*
- Director: *Jeff Newton, BG, ANG (Ret)*
- Director: *Doug Markham, CPT, USN (Ret)*
- Director: *James Oliver LTC, USA (Ret)*
- 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](mailto:newsletter@moaabirmingham.org).

**This is it!**

**My last president's message! It has been an eventful four years and I would like to thank everyone again for being supportive of our Chapter and myself. The members that show up for meetings, even the members that do not and especially the board members and a handful of individuals that take care of all the behind-the-scenes things that have made my life much easier and kept the chapter running smoothly.**

**Just a reminder that our January meeting will take place on the second Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>. Our speaker will be Niki Sepsas, who is always great; he will be speaking on the only woman in history to win the medal of honor, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker. It should be very interesting, so please come help kick off the New Year with us.**

**I would like to welcome LTC James Oliver to our GBC MOAA board. He has graciously accepted an invitation to serve and will be a great addition. Thanks again James!**

**We have started our chapter dues renewal season and having an excellent response. If you receive an email or letter for the same, your renewal is due. Your continued financial support is appreciated, even if you do not attend meetings. National MOAA has also made it much easier for us by paying all the Cheddar Up credit card processing fees. They are also picking up the processing fees for our dinner reservations, so please try to use that for your dinner RSVPs.**

**We will have a short change of command ceremony at our January meeting, with Harold Coghlan replacing myself as president; I will continue on the board in the past president position.**

**I trust everyone had a great holiday and spoiled their grandkids beyond repair. Enjoy, be safe and see you soon!**

**Respectfully,  
Don & Patricia**



**MEETING**  
**January 9, 2025**

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

**MENU**

Chicken Tetrazzini  
Fresh Cranberry Walnut Salad with House Ranch  
and Vinaigrette Dressings on the side  
Grilled Fresh Garden Vegetables  
Garlic Bread  
Assorted Fresh Baked Cookies and Brownies

**Dinner cost will be \$25 per person.**  
Reservations must be made by noon Monday, Jan 6, 2025.

**Preferred method:**

RSVP and pay by credit/debit card at:  
(AND NOW YOU DO NOT PAY ANY CREDIT CARD FEES!)

[JANUARY 9 2025 -reservation-and-payment](#)

**or alternate method:**

Email / call Donna Martin at [contact@moaabirmingham.org](mailto:contact@moaabirmingham.org) or 205-876-6274.



**SPEAKER: Niki Sepsas**

Niki is a world traveler, author, adventurer, excursion guide, speaker and finally, an Army veteran. He spends 6-8 months a year aboard cruise ships as a tour guide and speaker, where he has visited 160 countries and 7 continents. He has written over 1,000 articles, published in local as well as in national venues and has a novel to his name, "Song of the Gypsy". Also, two dozen coffee table books, personal memoirs, and a history book of Greek immigration to the US.

When not cruising the world, Niki is at home here in Birmingham with his wife Sherri and miniature schnauzer, Calista. We are extremely pleased to have Niki's time to speak to us and on such an interesting topic.

Niki's full bio and website are located here: <http://www.nikiwrites.com/biography.html>

**Niki's topic for January 9<sup>th</sup> MOAA meeting:**

**Angel of the Battlefield: Dr. Mary Edwards Walker and the Medal of Honor**

Authorized by President Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War, the Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor presented to members of the American military. Of the more than 3,500 Medals of Honor that have been presented (approximately 60 percent posthumously), one recipient has been a woman. This presentation chronicles the life of Mary Edwards Walker and how she became the only female recipient of the award.

## 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. And now you can renew your chapter dues, with NO CREDIT CARD FEES at:

<https://my.cheddarup.com/c/moaa-gbc-renewal/items?cart>

To join or renew, please complete the application below or join/renew online at:

<https://www.moaabirmingham.org/membership/>

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

My last assignment was with the Third US Army, the Army's component of Central Command. A few years ago, someone asked General Norman Schwarzkopf how he was adjusting to retirement. "One year ago," he answered, "I could issue an order, and 541,000 people would obey it. Today I can't get a plumber to come to my house."

General Schwarzkopf found out what it's like to be powerless, at least relative to his former post as commander of our Central Command forces in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Many people today feel that way; not only with regards to getting a plumber, but in dealing with all of life. They feel overwhelmed, defeated, and powerless. They are troubled by their inability to get control over their own lives.

Here again, Scripture has a phrase that comes to mind: "Power from on high." That is exactly what we need. And here is the grandest discovery of all: Power is available to us. God's power is available to each of us. An old hymn says it well: "Ask the Savior to help you... He will carry you through...."

Blessings,  
Chaplain Dan Phifer  
U.S. Army Retired

### MOAA speakers for 2025:

Jan - Niki Sepsas Angel of the Battlefield

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - 2025 COLA: 2.5%

### Congressional Budget Office Report threatens service member and veteran benefits

In June 2024, under the assumption that current laws governing taxes and spending generally would not change, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected that the federal deficit would average \$1.9 trillion per year between 2025 and 2034, or 5.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) over that period.<sup>1</sup> In comparison, over the past 50 years, the annual deficit averaged 3.7 percent of GDP. CBO also projected that federal debt held by the public would rise to 122 percent of GDP at the end of 2034.

Several measures in the recent report titled “Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2025 to 2034” provide options to reduce federal spending that would weaken or eliminate specific earned benefits for nearly all members of the uniformed services and veterans. A few of the options presented in the report that will reduce or eliminate military service member and veterans’ benefits include, but are not limited to:

1. **Mandatory outlays** (direct spending), which includes outlays for some federal benefit programs and for certain other payments to people, businesses, and state and local governments.
  - Reduce VA’s disability benefits for veterans who are older than the full retirement age for Social Security.
  - Narrow eligibility for VA’s disability compensation by excluding veterans with low disability ratings.
  - Introduce enrollment fees in TRICARE For Life.
  - Introduce minimum out-of-pocket requirements in TRICARE For Life.
  - Introduce means-testing for eligibility for VA’s disability compensation.
2. **Discretionary outlays** controlled by appropriation acts in which policymakers specify how much money will be provided for certain government programs and activities in specific years.
  - Reduce DoD’s annual budget.
  - Cap increases in basic pay for military servicemembers.
  - Replace some military personnel with civilian employees.
  - Reduce the basic allowance for housing to 80% of average housing costs.
3. **Revenues**, the majority of which are generated from individual income and payroll taxes.
  - Treat VA disability payments as taxable income.

MOAA believes it is imperative that we emphasize how such cuts such as these would damage the all-volunteer force in ways that far outweigh any potential savings. Add your voice to this effort by joining the [MOAA Legislative Action Center](#) and reaching out to your lawmakers.

LCDR Mark Rubino, USN (Ret)

**Legislative  
Action Center**



Four ways to get there:

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

**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

### 2025 New Beginnings

Happy New Year to our dear military family and friends. We wish you all a very special 2025.

Almost all of us have made “new year resolutions” to begin on January 1; *they don't usually last long!* They often have to do with weight control; being on a diet, etc. By February 14, if not before, we are enjoying our Valentine chocolates.

What if our new year resolution has more meaning than food? What if we have shared our resolution with our family and friends? What if we fail to follow through with our new year plan? And now everyone knows! Don't worry, they probably didn't follow through with their resolve either!

How can we make our new year approach positive and meaningful? Let's start with our time. We all have the same amount of time allotted to us. Let's promise to use our time wisely. How many committees and activities do I realistically have time for? If I over commit, I end up doing a poor job on everything. Plus, I don't allow enough down time for myself!

Let's remember to have time for our surviving spouses. Be kind! Reach out to others who may just need a phone call or a note in the mail.

We hope that every one of you has enjoyed the Holidays. If you traveled, I hope it was safe and fun. We hope you had some festive meals and maybe a special recipe. The meal or dessert is so tasty. When you ask for the recipe, you are told it is a family secret! But they share that special “family” recipe with you.

May 2025 shower you with good health, time with family and friends, maybe an exciting trip and a heart filled with love.

Sincerely,  
Lynn M. Phifer,  
Surviving Spouses Liaison

### How many have the new names memorized?

- Fort Benning, Georgia – renamed Fort Moore after Lt. Gen. Hal and Julia Moore.
- Fort Bragg, North Carolina – renamed Fort Liberty after the value of liberty.
- Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. – renamed Fort Walker after Dr. Mary Walker.
- Fort Hood, Texas – renamed Fort Cavazos after Gen. Richard Cavazos.
- Fort Lee, Virginia – renamed Fort Gregg-Adams after Lt. Gen. Arthur Gregg and Lt. Col. Charity Adams.
- Fort Pickett, Virginia – renamed Fort Barfoot after Tech. Sgt. Van T. Barfoot.
- Fort Polk, Louisiana. – renamed Fort Johnson after Sgt. William Henry Johnson.
- Fort Rucker, Alabama – renamed Fort Novosel after Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael J. Novosel, Sr.

## GREATER BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER INFORMATION

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January

Steve Driggers	4
Anne Hayes	8
Wes Cox	11
Sumter Coleman	12
Lynette Broxson	17
Pat Marvin	18
David McCrorie	21
Doug Markham	22
Heidi Mueninghoff	24
Wayne Hay	25
Don Broxson	27
Bob Roper	28
Carolyn Bellamy	29
Jack Ferrick	29

### 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: [donnaemaartin@aol.com](mailto:donnaemaartin@aol.com).

 <p><b>Killian, III, Sam P.</b>          4545 Magnolia Drive          Birmingham, AL 35242          Email: <a href="mailto:spkiii@bellsouth.net">spkiii@bellsouth.net</a>          Spouse: <i>Martha T. Killian</i>  <a href="mailto:marthak36@gmail.com">marthak36@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>USN Ret CDR Life          205-408-7721 (h)          205-903-6638 (c)          BD: 8/28          BD: 11/10</p> 
 <p><b>Lehman, Donald D. (Don)</b>          1204 Greystone Parc Drive          Birmingham, AL 35242          Email: <a href="mailto:don.lehman1@gmail.com">don.lehman1@gmail.com</a>          Spouse: <i>Patricia A. Lehman</i>  <a href="mailto:islandmomma1@gmail.com">islandmomma1@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>USMC Ret LTCOL Life          404-441-3882 (c)          BD: 7/10          BD: 11/20          404-725-7152 (c)</p> 

I had a thought, but unfortunately, I had a second thought. They ricocheted off each other & I can't find either one!





### MOAA BHM Christmas 2024

Writer Nick Thomas provides tongue-in-cheek New Year's resolutions that you can adopt as your own.

In the past, I've been rather unsuccessful adhering to New Year's resolutions. But this time will be different because I've composed a feasible list of goals for 2025 and, as everyone knows, Liszt was a great composer. So, if you'll pardon the tired old puns, here's my list of New Year's resolutions:

- To lose the weight I put on in 2024. But in my defense, I had a lot on my plate last year.
- To buy a cheap hairpiece for my bald spot. It will be a small price toupee.
- To visit the Grand Canyon. I've heard it's just gorges.
- To get a new set of golf clubs for my wife, which will be a fair trade.
- To clean all the mirrors in the house. Honestly, I could really see myself doing that.
- To relearn how to throw a boomerang. Hopefully, it will come back to me.
- To stop procrastinating. Eventually.
- To search the house for my favorite watch I lost last year. I just hope I can find the time.
- To learn how to pick locks. It should open doors for me in 2025.
- To sell my parakeet that lost its voice last year. Serious inquiries only - it's not going cheap.
- To install a giant picture window in my living room, which I know will be a big pane.
- To start a condescending Facebook group. I hope some of you will patronize it.
- To immediately stop eating deli meats, but it will be hard to quit cold turkey.
- To reward myself with a new golf shirt because over the holidays I got a hole in one.
- To order a chicken and an egg online to see which comes first.
- To refuse to attend funerals before 10 a.m. I'm just not an early mourning person.
- To get over my fear of hurdles, but it may take a leap of faith.
- To make a long overdue call to my wife's OB-GYN who delivered our kids and thank him for helping them out.
- To visit a nude beach, as soon as I overcome being clothes-minded.
- To give away my old broken garden gate. No, there's no catch.
- To dress up as a clown and entertain the neighborhood children for their birthdays. They will appreciate the jester.
- To learn sign language. It will be very handy.
- To replace all my shoelaces with Velcro straps. Well, why knot?



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	
<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!**





Meeting January 9, 2025