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April 2023



Huntsville Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America

# The Sentinel

Huntsvillemoaa.org



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CAPT Richard C. West, USN (Ret.)

Greetings all!

Weather warm and wet enough for you?

March's meeting was a successful one. Great turnout and good food! Many thanks to all of you who were able to attend. Sadly, our guest speaker was unable to attend due to the terrible events in Huntsville the previous night. I will work to include Chief Giles as a potential future speaker. FYI, he took the time to call and say he couldn't make the meeting. I informed him that many military members in our chapter understood exactly what he was going through!

Our April meeting will be on Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> at the Summit Club with "meet and greet" starting at 1030. This is the meeting many of you have been waiting for – the return of Larry Leopard from NASA to talk "Mars" with us. Hopefully we can also get a short update on the recent Lunar mission! See page 13 of The Sentinel for details. It is **NEVER** too early to reserve a spot at the meeting, and I expect this to be a full one! **RSVPs are open! Please RSVP to me at [rickw675@att.net](mailto:rickw675@att.net) or 256.776.6901.** Remember that family and guests are **ALWAYS** welcome – in fact, they are encouraged!

**ROTC/JROTC MOAA Medal presentations** are in full swing! Please see this disseminating email for the latest presentations for which we need volunteers. This is a great opportunity to help the Chapter and to meet with some great future leaders!

Our first **Golf committee meeting** of the season was held on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Attendance was personally disappointing in that we had no new volunteers. Folks, **we really do need your help** and we need it now. If you can spare a few hours a week and help us make this year's Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament the best ever, please let Bruce or I know or join us at our next meeting on **April 14<sup>th</sup>, at 1200** at The Links on Redstone. Better yet, come a little early and have some lunch with us at the Weeden Grill.

Enjoy the rest of the newsletter and don't overdo it on spring cleaning!

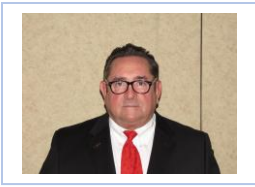
Rick

***Our Member Meeting is on 26 April – Guest Speaker is Mr. Larry Leopard, Technical Director at the Marshall Space Flight Center***

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*Note: National MOAA and the Huntsville Chapter are non-partisan organizations*



## Legislative Corner Lt Col Charles Clements, USAF-Ret

**Take  
Action**

→ <http://www.moa.org/takeaction/>



“All politics is local.”

The current legislative session began on 7 March and will adjourn on 14 June. Governor Kay Ivey used her annual State of the State address to call an anticipated special session on pandemic relief funds and propose one-time tax rebates of up to \$400 per taxpayer and \$800 for families. Governor Ivey, who is beginning her final full term in office, addressed lawmakers on the opening night of the 2023 legislative session where key issues include how to use the state's remaining pandemic relief funds as well as a \$2.8 billion education budget surplus. Ivey's proposal for the budget surplus includes the one-time rebates.

Governor Ivey, who had called lawmakers into special session to isolate the spending bill from other matters, signed the legislation shortly after it was approved. The \$1.06 billion comes from the American Rescue Plan. Alabama lawmakers, as they did with the first round of relief funds, opted to use the money for allowed infrastructure investments instead of expenses directly related to the pandemic. The Act includes:

- \$339 million for health care costs, including \$100 million to reimburse hospitals for pandemic-related expenses, \$100 million to reimburse nursing homes and \$25 million to support mental health programs and services.
- \$400 million for water and sewer infrastructure projects, including \$195 million for high-need projects, \$200 million for matching funds for public water and sewer systems, and \$5 million for septic systems in the Black Belt region.
- \$260 million for improvement and expansion of broadband network access.
- \$55 million for projects that address economic impacts of the pandemic.

In other news several advocates appeared before an Alabama House committee this week to urge its members to support expanding the state's Veterans Treatment Courts program, a program designed as an alternative route for veterans charged with a crime.

The idea of an alternative rehabilitation program designed specifically for veterans was first put into practice in 2008 in Buffalo, New York, and in Alabama for the first time in 2011 in Birmingham. Through a combination of veteran-tailored drug and mental health programs, the treatment court proved successful,

*Continued on page 9*

### 2023-2024 GOVERNING BOARD

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: CAPT Richard C. West, USN-Ret, 256-776-6901, [rickw675@att.net](mailto:rickw675@att.net)

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Secretary: COL Michael C. Barron, USA-Ret, 337-422-8862, [mbarron468@gmail.com](mailto:mbarron468@gmail.com)

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Navy Representative: COL Raymond G. Regner, USMC-Ret, 256-851-5903, [raymond.regner@gmail.com](mailto:raymond.regner@gmail.com)

Air Force Representative: Col Edward L. Uher, USAF-Ret, 256-882-6824, [bige992K@aol.com](mailto:bige992K@aol.com)

Immediate Past President: Col Gerald C. Maxwell, USAFR, 256-606-5282, [gerald.c.maxwell@nasa.gov](mailto:gerald.c.maxwell@nasa.gov)

Second Past President: Lt Col Charles T. Clements, USAF-Ret, 256-715-1671, [ctcbama76@gmail.com](mailto:ctcbama76@gmail.com)

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership (Acting): MAJ Bruce T. Robinson, USA-Ret, 256-426-0525, [brobinsol1976@gmail.com](mailto:brobinsol1976@gmail.com)

Programs: CAPT Richard C. West, USN-Ret, 256-776-6901, [rickw675@att.net](mailto:rickw675@att.net)

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Public Affairs (Publicity): Vacant

Chapter Historian: Vacant

Surviving Spouse Liaison: Vacant

Chapter Hospitality: Mrs. Carrie Hightower, 256-882-3992

Constitution and By-Laws: CAPT Richard C. West, USN-Ret, 256-776-6901, [rickw675@att.net](mailto:rickw675@att.net)

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#### LIFE MEMBERSHIP TRUST

COL John Fairlamb, USA-Ret, 256-539-0161, [fairlambjrf@comcast.net](mailto:fairlambjrf@comcast.net) (June 2023)

MAJ Monte C. Washburn, USA-Ret, 256-301-5457, [monte@washburns.org](mailto:monte@washburns.org) (June 2024)

Lt Col Gerald Haynes, USAF-Ret, 256-882-7857, [jerry15@hiwaay.net](mailto:jerry15@hiwaay.net) (July 2025)



**PX / Commissary**  
**Col Gerald C. Maxwell, USAFR**



**Main Exchange**

Main Exchange now opens at 8 am M-F (closing at 6pm) with self-checkout. The self-checkout area is for credit or debit cards only. Other specialty departments like PowerZone, Customer Service, Firearms, and Jewelry will not open until 9 am. Saturday is 9-6, Sunday 10-5. The Exchange now also offers FREE store to store transfer – should you find an item at another exchange and want it transferred to you home exchange. Also, Easter savings are on at your Exchange and specials are available.

Plants will be arriving at the end of March/early April at your exchange. This is a very popular sale so be early to get the best selections. Your Exchange also has a wide assortment of lawn care equipment, chemicals, fertilizer, and patio items all on sale. Shop early for best selection!

The Exchange Optical Shop has their very popular buy one gets one free offer for glasses going on now – not applicable if you use your insurance. You can also arrange for an eye exam – call for an appointment.

Tax season is here and the software to make it easier is available at your Exchange!

Apply for the AAFES Star card and get at least 10% your first day’s purchases with additional per cent off during periodic store specials and get 10% off at all food court items – plus, as always 5 cents off per gallon at the gas pumps (sometimes even more)!

Check the <https://www.shopmyexchange.com> web site every day for the super daily special. At this site, you can also see the latest specials, weekly sales, and sweepstakes.

**Shopette**

Stop by to see the “What’s New” section (spirits and wines) and the “Wine of the Month” for special selections and sales! Your Shopette now has an even wider selection of local craft brews!

Rent Bissell carpet cleaners (two-day rental just \$10 more) and now occasion cards are available at the Shopette.

Rent DVD videos from Redbox outside the Shopette and download the Redbox app for more deals.

Gas pumps available 24/7 with credit cards.

*Continued on page 9*

**Need Addresses**

We have lost track of the above members. If you know their whereabouts, please have them contact Bruce Robinson at 256-426-0525 to update their addresses.

**None this month**

**Concerns**

This month the following people were reported as being ill or recuperating and need our support and prayers:

**None this Month**

Persons to contact are:

Army Representative:  
**LTC Nicholas M. Mikus**  
256-604-7767  
[nicholasmikus@comcast.net](mailto:nicholasmikus@comcast.net)

Navy/USMC Representative:  
**COL Raymond G. Regner**  
256-851-5903  
[raymond.regner@gmail.com](mailto:raymond.regner@gmail.com)

Air/Space Force Representative:  
**Col Edward L. Uher**  
256-882-6824  
[biged992K@aol.com](mailto:biged992K@aol.com)

Personal Affairs Officer  
**Lt Col Gerald Haynes**  
256-882-7857  
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**CONTACT:**

**GERMI CLOUD,**  
NSSA, CRPC  
VICE PRESIDENT, WEALTH ADVISOR  
**256-715-0094**  
germie@cloudfinancial.com



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## Fox Army Health Center MAJ Bruce T. Robinson, USA-Ret



Fox Army Health Center has transitioned to a new electronic health record (EHR), MHS Genesis, to help streamline and standardize patient record keeping. We “went live” on 24 September. As we acclimate to using the new EHR, patients will experience longer than normal wait times for appointments in clinical services and pharmacy. To minimize wait times, we encourage using one of these alternative options for receiving same day care:

- TRICARE Nurse Advice Line
- Network Urgent Care Center
- Doctor on Demand
- Emergency Department

Follow these best practices to obtain your prescriptions during the MHS Genesis transition:

- For all medications, you MUST “activate” your prescription ahead of time to give the pharmacy time to prepare your medicine. Same day filling is not available.
- The FAHC phone extension x1030 will no longer be available. You will not be able to leave a voice message.
- All new or renewed prescriptions will need to be requested through the FAHC website, then click on either the PCRS or the MHS Genesis Patient Portal icon to activate the prescription. Link to the Fox Website: <https://redstone.tricare.mil/health-services/pharmacy>
- For refills, use the automated refill phone line to activate: 256-842-7337

Fox Optometry Clinic provides primary care vision services including comprehensive ocular health exams to all beneficiaries (Active Duty, Active-Duty Family Members, Retirees and their family members. Call the main appointment line, 256-955-8888 option 2.

The FAHC Laboratory is closing at 1300 daily.

Fox Army Health Center continues to accept interested individuals that would like to volunteer their time through the American Red Cross. Please visit <http://www.redcross.org/alabamamississippi> to apply or contact Ms. Tammy Burks at [tammy.burks@redcross.org](mailto:tammy.burks@redcross.org) or 256-763-1237 for any questions. You may also visit the North Alabama Red Cross office at 1015 Airport Road SW, Suite 202 Huntsville, AL 35802.

Universal masking is no longer mandated for patients or team members of Fox. This change is based on current COVID transmission levels which have fallen, and updated DHA and CDC guidance. If COVID transmission levels increase, universal masking may be required again so please remain flexible. We will monitor transmission levels carefully and update the signage at the doors indicating whether universal masking is required or not. Masking is still required for anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Masking is also still required for anyone who has had a high-risk COVID exposure within the last 10 days, and for those who have had COVID-19 symptoms within the last 10 days. Please note - per OSHA guidelines, COVID screening questionnaires are still required for every patient encounter. As your safety remains of utmost importance to us if you still want to wear your mask, that is completely optional and your choice.

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**Edward Jones**

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**When it comes to your to-do list, put your future first.**

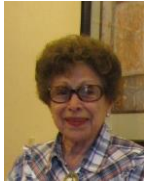
Together, let's create an investment strategy that works for you. Contact us for a complimentary portfolio review.



**Dale C Kuehl, AAMS™**  
Financial Advisor

2045 Cecil Ashburn Drive S E  
Suite 103  
Huntsville, AL 35802  
256-881-1583

FAP-1966G-A



## Surviving Spouse's Luncheon

**Mrs. Carrie Hightower**  
**256-882-3992**

This month's luncheon we be on Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, at the Old Greenbrier BBQ, 27028 Old Hwy 20, Madison.  
Phone 256-351-1800 – we will gather at 11 AM.  
Everyone will be called.

## Surviving Spouse Corner: Survivor Benefit Plan Update

The FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act terminated the so-called “widows tax,” allowing eligible military surviving spouses to collect the full Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) in full, with no offset (no reduction) after a three-year phase-in period. We are now entering the third and final phase. What happens now?

**Survivor benefits.** DIC, SBP, and the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) were increased by the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 8.7% with the January 2023 payments. Beginning Feb. 1, 2023, eligible surviving spouses will receive their full SBP payment from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and their full DIC payment from the VA without offset. The SSIA payment will stop, as this payment essentially becomes part of the full SBP payment. If you recall, the SSIA was a temporary solution to the offset, which is no longer necessary due to the aforementioned legislation. Although the SSIA goes away, the total these surviving spouses receive in their name will not be less than what was received the month prior for these specific benefits. There is no change to DIC other than the COLA increase.

**Child Option Annuitants.** Beginning Feb. 1, 2023, the annuity will transfer to the servicemember's surviving spouse provided they are an eligible spouse and have completed the appropriate paperwork for the transfer. If the surviving children are currently receiving the annuity, they have been receiving the full SBP, plus COLA increases, so what they receive in January 2023 will be the amount the eligible surviving spouse will receive. If the surviving children have already aged out of the program, the SBP will be recalculated to incorporate all prior years' COLAs. You can read more by [clicking here](#) or [here](#). You will be able to sign up for MyPay once the annuity transfers to you by [clicking here](#). Please note that recent changes in the SBP law do not impact the retiree child option SBP election, only that for the post-9/11 active-duty child option election that was primarily made due to the SBP-DIC offset rules.

Eligible surviving spouses should have received a letter from DFAS in late 2022 detailing the background of the change, an example calculation, and a personalized SBP estimate. (Please note these were estimates only.) Find additional details about these updates from [DFAS](#) and [MOAA](#). Be sure to follow the [MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook page](#) as well.

Please note this article is not intended to address all possible scenarios. And remember, military retirees who previously opted out of SBP will soon have a second chance to enroll. [Click here](#) to read a recent MOAA article on the topic.



**Chaplain's Corner**  
**Col Dave McKinney, USAF-Ret**

**Psalm 121**

**A Song of Ascents.**

**<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?**

**<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.**

**<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.**

**<sup>4</sup> He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.**

**<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

Welcome to April, a month that is known for the rain that brings us May flowers. Yet, even with the promise of pretty flowers, we are prone to be in the midst of trials and tribulations. My wife recently had surgery, and the pathology report was not the greatest news. She is strong and is standing on the promise God has given us all. This experience brought me back to my diagnosis 6 years ago with kidney cancer. There was the shock and awe of what? Why me? God never promised that bad things would not come our way, but He did promise to help us in our time of need. My first big need was the drive home from the hospital after a grueling partial kidney removal and a 4-day hospital stay. The drive home was a 45-minute drive through the pothole laden roads of Jackson, MS. I even wanted to go home without my pain meds, but the doctor looked at me and said only an idiot would even attempt that on these roads after what I'd been through. God came my way and provided the smoothest drive home-almost like riding on glass. Yes, I was doped up, but my wife was the first one to realize that after 40 minutes we had not hit one bump. The Lord, my Keeper, continued to provide the help I needed to get where I am today, cancer free. Have you faced tough news? Having a hard time? Remember your help comes from the Lord, your Keeper.

If you would like to share prayer requests or contact me. I can be reached at [MOAACHaplain@gmail.com](mailto:MOAACHaplain@gmail.com) or call/text (334)467-6860.

Blessings, Dave



**Memorials**

If you would like to send a memorial contribution to the Huntsville Chapter MOAA, please send the following information along with your check to: Memorials, HCMOAA, P.O. Box 1301, Huntsville, AL 35807

In memory of:

By:

**Membership Statistics**

Total Members: 319  
Regular Members: 270  
Surviving Spouses: 49

New this month: 1  
Deaths this month: 2  
Renewals: 7

**Welcome New Members to  
Huntsville Chapter MOAA**

**COL Jason Kerr, USA**

**Recruiting**

You are our best recruiter. If you have a friend, colleague or co-worker who is eligible to join MOAA, or who already belongs to MOAA National – bring him/her to a Chapter meeting. You would be doing both them and the Chapter a favor.



*Legislative – continued from page 2*

with the one-year recidivism rate of graduates being just 14%, a stark contrast with the national rate of 44%. Currently, 28 counties in Alabama have access to Veterans Treatment Courts programs. Jones, who also chairs the Senate Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Safety, stated that the bill should be ready for debate in April.

The president’s budget request for FY 2024 comes in at \$6.8 trillion. This budget requests \$880 billion for defense programs (an increase of 3.3% over last year). It includes a 5.2% pay raise for uniformed servicemembers as well as a 5.2% pay increase for federal civilians. The budget requests \$325 billion for the VA, a 5% increase over the previous year. The proposal includes over \$142 billion in discretionary funding, much of which goes toward veterans’ health care, and over \$182 billion in mandatory funding to cover compensation and pensions, readjustment benefits, and insurance and indemnities accounts.

The House passed a bill, S. 619, to require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information regarding the origins of COVID-19. The vote was 419-0, and the Senate had already cleared the measure by unanimous consent. The rare unanimity on a substantive issue comes as a growing divide emerges within the government about the origins of the disease, which has killed millions. Though the majority of the Intelligence Community seems to maintain that COVID-19 occurred naturally, news broke in February that the Department of Energy had determined that Covid-19 may have originated from a laboratory leak in China. Earlier this month, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Wray said, “the FBI has for quite some time now assessed that the origins of the pandemic are most likely a potential lab incident in Wuhan.” POTUS has not yet signed the Act into Law.

The February 2023 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), released March 14, was 295.057, 1.1% above the FY 2023 baseline of 291.901. The next CPI-W release is set for April 12. The CPI-W figures from the end of this fiscal year (July, August, and September 2023) will be compared to the FY 2023 COLA baseline to calculate the 2024 COLA. III

*PX/Commissary – continued from page 3*

**Commissary**

Sign up for savings at [mymilitarysavings.com](http://mymilitarysavings.com). A few clicks, and you will get information on current and upcoming Commissary and AAFES sales. Plus recipes, contests, and there is an app you can download (Apple and android), that will take you directly to the site.

Your Commissary also has their Plant Sale about to start with ferns and assorted plants available through May.

Make tax season easier with the family gathered around the grill. Stop in and get savings on barbecue meats, ketchup, a huge assortment of mustards, pickles, lettuce and buns! Everything to make the tax season more bearable – including aspirin, Tylenol, and other headache relief medications. III





## HCMOAA Treasurer's Report February 2023

Submitted by Lt Col Charles T. Clements, USAF (Ret.)

1. The February 2023 Treasurer's Report is presented herein.

2. Monthly Summary:

	Operating Funds	Savings
Starting Balance	\$18,120.80	\$ 4,525.45
Income	\$ 2,210.00	\$ 0.52
Expenses	\$ 1,409.24.	\$ 0.00
Ending Balance	\$18,921.56	\$ 4,525.97

3. Notable income: February's membership luncheon, Sentinel advertisement, member dues, a payment from National (by way of USAA) for HCMOAAASF, and petty cash.

4. Notable expenses: Payment of the January Membership Luncheon, rental of a PO Box, and petty cash.

5. Chapter Saving account activity was limited to interest.

6. Certificate of Deposit was purchased in the amount of \$12,000 from Wells Fargo on 20 October 2022. The CD is for 7 months at an interest rate of 2.5%. Interest to date is \$100.29.

7. The Chapter Operating Funds contains \$3,091.68 in reserved funds donated by various VSOs in support of the RAD Luncheon for the Retirees. This is money unused from pervious donations and will be applied to a future RAD luncheon or similar event.

### Scholarship Fund Donations

The Chapter has an active scholarship program. In conjunction with the RSA Military & Civilians' Club, we issue scholarships each year to deserving area students. **Please consider donating.** Contact Rick West, at [rickw675@att.net](mailto:rckw675@att.net) or 256.776.6901 for details.

The Scholarship Fund operates on a calendar year. Remember that the fund is fully tax deductible due to 501(c)(3) status. **100% of all donations go toward scholarships.**

Note: The below amounts reflect only donations directly to the fund. Golf Tournament monies are tracked separately and presented to the membership following the tournament.

### Scholarship Fund Donations Received During March 2023

None

Total received for March:	\$0.00
Total received CY23:	<b>\$0.00</b>





Huntsville Chapter  
 Military Officers Association of America  
 P.O. Box 1301 - Huntsville, AL 35807  
[www.huntsvillemoaa.org](http://www.huntsvillemoaa.org)



**Membership Application or Renewal**  
 Yes - I'd like to add my voice to the Huntsville Chapter!

<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> One Year \$10*	If New, how did you hear about us? <input type="checkbox"/> MOAA National <input type="checkbox"/> Local event <input type="checkbox"/> Letter / e-mail from HCMOAA <input type="checkbox"/> HCMOAA website <input type="checkbox"/> Friend / acquaintance <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please explain _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal**	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Years \$20	
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership***	<input type="checkbox"/> Three Years \$30	

\*New members joining after September 1<sup>st</sup> will have their membership paid through following calendar year  
 \*\*If renewing just update any address or phone changes, verify e-mail address, and sign the form  
 \*\*\*Interested in a Chapter Life Membership? Contact us for pricing (age-based)

_____ First Name	_____ MI	_____ Last Name
_____ Preferred Name	_____ Birth Date	_____ Spouse's Name
_____ Grade	_____ Branch of Service	_____ Period(s) of Active Duty (i.e. 1965-1990)

Membership in our MOAA Chapter is not the same as MOAA National membership. At a minimum, FREE "Basic" MOAA National membership is required. If you are not already a National member, we will add you as a Basic member. Again, it's FREE and provides several valuable benefits. Please contact us for more information.

\_\_\_\_\_ MOAA National Membership Number

<input type="checkbox"/> Active	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> NG	<input type="checkbox"/> Former Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> Reserve	<input type="checkbox"/> Surviving Spouse
_____ Mailing Address	_____ City	_____ State	_____ Zip		
_____ Phone Number	_____ E-mail Address	_____ Signature			

**Attention Annual Members**

It is past time to renew your membership for next year – ***you will be dropped from the rolls!***  
 The Chapter has one of, if not the, lowest membership rates in the country at \$10.

***PAST DUE: those members being dropped from the rolls are listed on the following page***

You can also renew for multiple years and lock in that low rate.  
 Don't know when your membership expires? Contact MAJ Bruce Robinson at  
 256-426-0525 or [brobinso1976@gmail.com](mailto:brobinso1976@gmail.com).

Don't want to worry about renewing ever again - consider becoming a Chapter Life Member – contact  
 COL John Fairlamb at 256-539-0161 or [fairlambjrf@comcast.net](mailto:fairlambjrf@comcast.net) for the details.

## Annual Members Needing to Renew

COL Richard F Bowyer, USA  
LTC Earl A Freeman, USA  
CW5 Reginald Jacobs, USA  
CAPT Alan G Maiorano, USN  
LTC Douglas L Oyler, USA  
MAJ Gary L Pollard, USA  
MAJ Wesley R Sparks, USA  
LTC Christopher R Stewart, USA  
COL Lee M Tonsmeire, USA

LTC Levern Eady, USA  
MAJ James Greene, USA  
LTC Edwin L Kennedy, USA  
Col Millard E Moon, USAF  
LTC Steven R Palmer, USA  
CW4 Samuel Smith, USA  
CPT Sean R Sterling, USA  
Maj James M Tynan, USAF



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5PM- 11PM TUESDAY - SATURDAY  
HAPPY HOUR DAILY 5PM- 6:30PM

## Governing Board Vacancies

The Chapter has several vacancies on the Governing Board that we are looking to fill with volunteers from the membership. They include:

**Surviving Spouse Liaison** – responsible for keeping the surviving spouses of the Chapter informed & look out for their welfare – you do not have to be a surviving spouse the serve

**Membership Chair** – responsible for recruiting and retention of Chapter members – this is a key position

**Webmaster** – responsible for all aspects of the Chapter website – ideally this would be a member's child or grandchild who is website savvy – this is a key position

**Publicity** – responsible for advertising Chapter events – primarily the golf tournament



**Membership Meeting**  
**26 April 2023**  
**1100 – Summit Club**

**Guest Speaker: Larry Leopard**  
**Associate Technical Director, NASA Marshall Flight Center**

Larry Leopard, Associate Director, Technical, at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, provides expert advice in all facets of the Center's responsibilities by conducting special studies; provide authoritative advice and assistance in policy review; manage and report on Center-wide and directorate metrics, and developing benchmarking strategies. He was appointed to the position in December 2020.

Prior to his appointment, Leopard served as director of the Engineering Directorate from 2018 to 2020. From 2014 to 2016, Leopard was director of the Engineering Directorate's Space Systems Department, and was its deputy director from 2011 to 2014. From 2008 to 2011, he was deputy manager of Engineering's Propulsion Systems Department.

Leopard joined NASA and Marshall in 1990, supporting a variety of NASA programs and projects, including space shuttle propulsion elements; the Space Shuttle Main Engine Technology Test Bed; Rocket-Based Combined Cycle propulsion technology; Fastrac 60K engine; International Space Station payloads, International Space Station Environmental Control and Life Support Systems and research facilities; Small Satellite technology demonstrations; and multiple science instruments.

His aerospace engineering career began as a propulsion engineer at Martin Marietta in Huntsville, supporting Marshall's Propulsion Systems Laboratory from 1988 to 1990.

A native of Athens, Alabama, Leopard graduated from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 1987 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

Leopard has received numerous NASA awards, including the Medal for Outstanding Leadership in 2007 and 2011; the Medal for Exceptional Achievement in 1997 for leading the Integrated Propulsion Technology Demonstrator team; multiple Center Director's Commendations; and numerous group achievement and special service awards. In 1993, he was awarded the Silver Snoopy, the NASA astronaut corps' award to those who have made significant contributions to the success of NASA's human spaceflight missions.

Leopard and his wife Shane live in Athens and have two children.

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**Menu:** Beef Lasagna; Smoked Turkey with Brown Gravy; Green Beans Almondine; Potato Salad; Baked Apples; Rolls with Butter; Assorted Beverages

**Cost:** \$20 for Chapter members and families; \$25 for non-members / guests – pay at the door – cash or check only. **Exact change is appreciated.**

**RSVP:** CAPT Rick West, 256-776-6901, [rickw675@att.net](mailto:rckw675@att.net), NLT 21 April 2023



**24 Birthdays in April**

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| COL Faison P Gibson, USA      | LCDR Don R Vaden, USN        |
| LCDR Emanuel M Tsikalas, USN  | Mrs. Myrna G Griffiths       |
| CPT Stephen E Cecil, USMC     | Mrs. Josephine O Walsh       |
| CW4 Christopher R Chance, USA | MAJ Gordon M Brown, USA      |
| Lt Col Edward J Gniadek, USAF | MAJ Theron Bowman, USA       |
| LTG George R Stotser, USA     | LTC Fred Maksimowski Jr, USA |
| COL Herbert M Dixon, USA      | Mrs. Lillian Kawano          |
| Mrs. Terry Cave               | 1LT William H Redmond, USAR  |
| Lt Col David L Dunlap, USAF   | Mrs. Pattie C Chatfield      |
| CW4 Dennis M Horn, USN        | LTC Mark L O'Brien, USA      |
| COL Joshua S Kennedy, USA     | LTC Michael K Wegler, USA    |
| LTC Samuel Scruggs, USA       |                              |
| LTC Audrey Ransom, USA        |                              |

If we missed your birthday, it's because we don't have it on file. Please e-mail your birth date to MAJ Bruce Robinson at [brobinso1976@gmail.com](mailto:brobinso1976@gmail.com) so it can be included in future newsletters. Thank you.

**Redstone Arsenal Tax Center**

The Redstone Arsenal Tax Center is now open and preparing federal and all state taxes for eligible clients. The eligible client population includes active duty and retired military members, and their lawful dependents. Reservists and National Guard on orders for 30 days or more are also eligible clients.

The Tax Center is in Legal Assistance Office located in Building 3439 on Honest John Road, across from the Pagano Gym. The phone number is 256-842-1040.

The Tax Center's hours are 0830 to 1600, Monday through Friday. Tax clients are asked to drop off their documents each morning between 0830 and 1230. Prepared taxes may then be picked up three days later between 1300 and 1600. Appointments are no longer being accepted.

All clients are asked to bring all current tax documents, valid ID card, drivers license, and last year's taxes. For married couples filing jointly, both spouses' information is required.



*Our deepest sympathy and prayers are extended to the families and friends of:*

### **TAPS**

**LTC James "Jim" M. Carter (USA-Ret)** - 79, of Huntsville died Tuesday, 21 March, 2023. He was preceded in death by his father, Thomas Francis Carter, Sr., mother, Geraldine Mayo Carter, and brother, Thomas Francis Carter, Jr. He is survived by his wife, the former Anna Monette Allen; children, Christi Leigh Carter Houston of Farmersville, TX, James Mayo Carter, Jr. of Saltillo, MS, and Jonathan Allen Carter of Huntsville; grandchildren, Alexis Presley, Blake Houston, Cooper Carter, Lane Carter, Ragon Carter, and Collins Carter; and nephew, Thomas Francis Carter III.

Mr. Carter graduated from Mississippi State University and was commissioned in the United States Army in 1965, where he served with great distinction for more than 20 years, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Among his many awards were the Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf) and the Meritorious Service Medal (with Oak Leaf). Additionally, he received the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medals for actions in Vietnam. He also served in Korea, Taiwan, and Germany and commanded several varied units, including a Mechanized Infantry Company, an Air Defense Missile Battery, and a Nuclear-Weapons Delivery Unit. He was selected to be the Senior Aide-De-Camp to the Commanding General, 7th Infantry Division in the Republic of Korea. Additionally, as a Captain, he served as a Battalion Executive Officer in Vietnam. He was attached to the US Embassy in Taipei, Taiwan as the Senior Missile Depot Advisor. He graduated from the US Army Command and General Staff College in 1976 and received a Master's Degree from the University of Southern California in 1982. After retiring from the Army in 1985, Mr. Carter had a distinguished career in the Military Defense Industry as a Senior Systems Analyst.

Visitation was from 10 to 11 AM on Saturday, March 25 at Trinity United Methodist Church, with the service immediately following.

**MAJ John Clinton Rist (USA-Ret)** - known to his family and friends as "Jack," died at the age of 94 on March 17, 2023 in Huntsville, Alabama.

Jack was born November 8, 1928 in Youngstown, Ohio, and spent his childhood on his family's farm in Tennessee. After graduating from the college ROTC program in Ohio, he proudly served his country for 20 years as an artillery officer in the U.S. Army, including two tours of duty in the Vietnam War. His army career took him to Greenland, Greece and Germany, as well as other locations around the globe. However, it was during his time in Germany that Jack met his beloved wife, Karin. It was just a matter of time before the family grew to include two children, Dianne and "Bo," and they moved to Huntsville, Alabama. While in Huntsville, Jack earned master's degrees in psychology and business administration, served as a counselor at the Mental Health Center, and worked at the Redstone Arsenal Missile Munitions Center and School.

Jack had great friends and enjoyed playing poker, bowling in a league, singing in a barbershop chorus, and volunteering at several charitable organizations and foundations including the Lion's Club, the American Chestnut Foundation, and the Land Trust of North Alabama. He was also an avid world traveler, and, in his later years, traveled with his daughter Dianne to various locations in Central America, South America and Alaska. Jack was also a bit of a daredevil, and for his 85th birthday, went skydiving for the first time in his life.

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Jack was a fun-loving, gregarious soul with a contagious laugh. He dearly loved his extended family deeply and remained close with them throughout his life. Jack was generous to a fault, both with his time and money, always looking out for the forgotten and the downtrodden. Like his father before him, Jack was a committed Democrat in a sea of Republican friends, and he was always ready to explain why he had taken the "better path." Jack was also a history buff and an avid reader who was passionate about nature and the environment.

Jack is preceded in death by his parents Lafayette ("Fate") and Nina Dysinger Rist, his sister Mary Ellen Rist, and his beloved wife, Karin Schmitt Rist. He is survived by his children, Dianne (Todd Duclos) and John "Bo" (Maria) Rist; granddaughters, Elena and Silvia Rist; and many cousins in middle Tennessee.

Visitation of family and friends will be held at 12:00 pm Saturday, April 1, 2023, at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, 625 Airport Rd. SE, Huntsville, AL 35802.

***Gone but not forgotten for their dedicated support and service to our Country.***

***We will miss these outstanding Leaders and Patriots.***



**Sadly, this month's guest speaker, Chief Kirk Giles, had to cancel due to the terrible events involving the Huntsville Police Department on 3/28/23. Our condolences to ALL involved!**



## **Retirees to Get a Second Chance to Enroll In or Opt Out of the Survivor Benefit Plan**

Military retirees who opted out of a valuable survivor's benefit when they left active duty will get a rare second chance to enroll thanks to a new rule in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. The same measure allows currently enrolled users to leave the program.

Retirees typically get only one chance to enroll in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Those who opt in usually name their spouses as the beneficiaries, said Mark Belinsky, director of currently serving/retired affairs for the Military Officers Association of America and an Army retiree.

The SBP is like a life insurance policy with no cap. After a retiree dies, the SBP pays a beneficiary up to 55% of the retiree's retirement pay, adjusted for inflation, monthly for the rest of the surviving spouse's life, or till a child reaches an age cap.

The SBP is such "a very good plan," Belinsky said, that for retiring service members to opt out, their spouses have to consent.

But despite the benefit's high face value, many retirees declined coverage because of a rule known colloquially as the "widow's tax" and officially as the Survivor Benefit Plan offset. That law reduced SBP payments to spouses who were also eligible for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) allowances. DIC allowances are for the surviving spouses of service members who died on active duty or of veterans who died from injuries received as a result of their service.

The Defense Department has eliminated the SBP offset in phases, with full removal as of the Feb. 1, 2023 pay date, so now is a good time to open up enrollment, Belinsky said.

When service members decline coverage at retirement, only a few life changes would allow them to enroll, such as if a service member was single at retirement and later gained a spouse. But limitations apply. Those who opt in -- the default -- get to withdraw or change their coverage only in their third year of receiving retirement pay or in limited other situations such as if their beneficiary dies first.

A child may also receive the benefit, but not for life, as may others such as a business partner or parent in the absence of a spouse or children.

Those who enroll during the open season will have to catch up on paying the premiums they missed since retiring plus pay interest and "any additional amount" deemed necessary to maintain the "soundness" of the Defense Department's retirement fund, according to the new law.

Current enrollees can opt out during the open season with their spouse and/or beneficiaries' consent but won't receive a refund for the premiums they've already paid.

The open season to enroll begins with Biden's signature and ends Jan. 1, 2024. Anyone receiving retirement pay who hasn't already enrolled in the SBP may take advantage of the open season in 2023. Retirees are eligible who either already receive retirement pay or who would receive it except they haven't yet reached age 60.

## Secure Act 2.0

The Secure Act 2.0 is law now and contains a host of changes designed to make saving, investing and planning for retirement easier.

In a world where guaranteed pensions have been on the endangered list for years and Social Security benefits seem to always be under the threat of cutbacks, it's more important than ever for Americans to take control of their own retirement fortunes. The Secure Act 2.0 builds on the changes introduced in the 2019 Secure Act by further expanding your opportunities to invest for retirement and giving you more control and flexibility when it's time to tap into your assets in retirement. Here are some of the highlights of the new law.

### FOR PEOPLE IN OR CLOSING IN ON RETIREMENT

- Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from Retirement Accounts
  - The age to start taking RMDs increases to age 73 in 2023 and to 75 in 2033.
  - The penalty for failing to take an RMD decreases to 25% of the RMD amount, from 50% currently, and 10% if corrected in a timely manner for IRAs.
  - Starting in 2024, RMDs will no longer be required from Roth accounts in employer retirement plans.
- Catch-up Contributions
  - Starting on January 1, 2025, individuals ages 60 through 63 years old will be able to make larger catch-up contributions to a workplace plan (up to \$10,000 annually for most plans), and that amount will be indexed to inflation. The catch-up amount for people age 50 and older is currently \$7,500 for most plans.
  - Beginning in 2024, if you earn over \$145,000 in wages from your employer in the prior year, your catch-up contributions to that employer's plan must be made on an after-tax basis to a Roth account.
- Greater 529 Plan Flexibility
  - After 15 years, any unused 529 College Savings Plan assets can be rolled over to the beneficiary's Roth IRA without taxes or penalties. Previously, the only option was to withdraw the money and pay any applicable taxes and penalties, so this is an attractive alternative that can allow a parent to repurpose remaining funds to their own retirement or give a young person a head start. It should be noted that these rollovers are subject to annual Roth IRA contribution limits and an aggregate lifetime limit of \$35,000.

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## FOR PEOPLE NOT YET CLOSE TO RETIRING

- Automatic Enrollment in Retirement Plans
  - Businesses adopting new 401(k) and 403(b) plans will be required to automatically enroll eligible employees at a contribution rate of at least 3%, beginning in 2025.
- Helping Those with Student Loan Debt Save for Retirement
  - Starting in 2024, employers will be able to “match” employee student loan payments with contributions to their retirement plan, making it possible for workers to begin accumulating assets for their future while paying off educational loans.
- Employer Contributions
  - You may have the option to receive employer contributions to your Roth account if your plan allows it. Previously, all employer contributions were required to be treated as traditional (tax-deferred), but this change will allow employees to pay tax on company contributions now, so that future earnings can grow tax-free. The more years left until retirement, the more impactful this change is likely to be.
- Helping Military Spouses Save for Retirement
  - Because of frequent moves and job changes, military spouses often miss out on the full benefit of employer contributions. To address this, the legislation offers tax incentives to small employers who make military spouses eligible for retirement plan participation sooner and compress or eliminate vesting schedules.
- Emergency Expense Distributions
  - Beginning in 2024, early “emergency” distributions from retirement accounts will be permitted to cover unforeseeable or immediate financial needs. An emergency distribution of up to \$1,000 can be taken penalty-free once during the year.

It’s important to maximize your opportunities when it comes to saving and investing for your future. And when it’s time to begin accessing the funds you have worked hard to accumulate, it’s important to understand all your options.

You need to keep apprised of changing rules and requirements so you can make the smart, informed decisions that are essential to effectively pursuing the retirement you envision. IIII

## The New TRICARE Pharmacy Contract: Delivering Value for Military Families and Taxpayers

By Gilbert Cisneros Jr., Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

I'm proud of the work of our team at the Defense Department to negotiate and implement a new TRICARE pharmacy contract. The improvements that were made will not only establish stronger access standards and deliver exceptional value for military families; they will also improve efficiency and stewardship of taxpayer funds.

The new TRICARE pharmacy contract has attracted criticism in another Military.com op-ed, and I want to respond and correct the record.

The previous contract had two major problems. First, it measured access by the straight-line distance from a beneficiary's home to a retail pharmacy, so it failed to consider traffic, road conditions, or topography—such as the need to cross a body of water or go around a mountain—that could make for an unacceptably long journey. Second, the retail network was overly costly and, in some cases, inefficient. The network included pharmacies that were filling few or no prescriptions for our beneficiaries, resulting in unnecessarily high costs. We saw an opportunity to improve service for beneficiaries while saving money for military families and taxpayers by creating a more efficient, competitively priced network.

Under the new contract, 98% of TRICARE beneficiaries live within 15 minutes' driving time of a network retail pharmacy, and more than 99% live within a 30-minute drive. This improved standard for TRICARE is comparable to the Veterans Health Administration standard and exceeds the Medicare pharmacy-access standard. By paying competitive fees to pharmacies, we will save an estimated \$2 billion in taxpayer funds over the seven-year life of the contract, and beneficiaries are projected to save \$100 million through lower out-of-pocket costs. These savings are notable, given long-term trends in the cost of health care: Medicare projects that annual growth in health spending will average 5.1% through 2030. Some beneficiaries have found that their pharmacy is no longer in-network, but the new contract provides other options within a 15-minute drive for nearly all beneficiaries, in addition to mail-order access.

Furthermore, we made these changes while maintaining among the lowest cost-sharing of any health plan. Service members, retirees, and their families can fill prescriptions at [military hospitals and clinics](#), via [mail order](#), or at [network retail pharmacies](#). TRICARE beneficiaries can fill generic and name-brand prescriptions for \$0 copays—that's right, no out-of-pocket cost—at a military pharmacy. At a retail pharmacy, a 30-day fill costs no more than \$14 for generics (TRICARE beneficiaries pay the lower of the actual cost or \$14) and \$38 for name-brand drugs. Compare this to one of the most popular health plans for federal employees, the Service Benefit Plan Basic Option, which charges a \$15 copay for a 30-day supply of generic drugs, \$60 for preferred name-brand drugs, and \$90 or more for non-preferred name-brand drugs. And TRICARE beneficiaries can pay even less and receive a 90-day supply from a mail-order pharmacy.

I acknowledge that our communication with beneficiaries and pharmacies about the upcoming changes has generated feedback, and I am committed to improving our communication process. After hearing from both beneficiaries and independent pharmacies, we asked the contractor to offer additional time for pharmacies to opt into the contract. As a result, more than 4,000 of the roughly 15,000 independent pharmacies that had left re-joined as a result of the re-solicitation, bringing the total number of independent pharmacies in the network to more than 11,000—over half of all independents in the United States. With these additions, TRICARE's current network includes more than 42,500 participating retail pharmacies.

The new TRICARE pharmacy contract is more efficient and does right by beneficiaries and taxpayers. That's exactly what Americans should expect of their government.

## History of Easter

**Easter**, Latin **Pascha**, Greek **Pascha**, principal festival of the Christian church, which celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after his Crucifixion. The earliest recorded observance of an Easter celebration comes from the 2nd century, though the commemoration of Jesus' Resurrection probably occurred earlier. The English word Easter, which parallels the German word *Ostern*, is of uncertain origin. One view, expounded by the Venerable Bede in the 8th century, was that it derived from Eostre, or Eostræ, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility. This view presumes—as does the view associating the origin of Christmas on December 25 with pagan celebrations of the winter solstice—that Christians appropriated pagan names and holidays for their highest festivals. Given the determination with which Christians combated all forms of paganism (the belief in multiple deities), this appears a rather dubious presumption. There is now widespread consensus that the word derives from the Christian designation of Easter week as *in albis*, a Latin phrase that was understood as the plural of *alba* (“dawn”) and became *eostarum* in Old High German, the precursor of the modern German and English term. The Latin and Greek Pascha (“Passover”) provides the root for Pâques, the French word for Easter.

### **The date of Easter and its controversies**

Fixing the date on which the Resurrection of Jesus was to be observed and celebrated triggered a major controversy in early Christianity in which an Eastern and a Western position can be distinguished. The dispute, known as the Paschal controversies, was not definitively resolved until the 8th century. In Asia Minor, Christians observed the day of the Crucifixion on the same day that Jews celebrated the Passover offering—that is, on the 14th day of the first full moon of spring, 14 Nisan (*see* Jewish calendar). The Resurrection, then, was observed two days later, on 16 Nisan, regardless of the day of the week. In the West the Resurrection of Jesus was celebrated on the first day of the week, Sunday, when Jesus had risen from the dead. Consequently, Easter was always celebrated on the first Sunday after the 14th day of the month of Nisan. Increasingly, the churches opted for the Sunday celebration, and the Quartodecimans (“14th day” proponents) remained a minority. The Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21). Easter, therefore, can fall on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25.

Eastern Orthodox churches use a slightly different calculation based on the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar (which is 13 days ahead of the former), with the result that the Orthodox Easter celebration usually occurs later than that celebrated by Protestants and Roman Catholics. Moreover, the Orthodox tradition prohibits Easter from being celebrated before or at the same time as Passover.

In the 20th century several attempts were made to arrive at a fixed date for Easter, with the Sunday following the second Saturday in April specifically proposed. While this proposal and others had many supporters, none came to fruition. Renewed interest in a fixed date arose in the early 21st century, resulting from discussions involving the leaders of Eastern Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Coptic, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches, but formal agreement on such a date remained elusive.

### **Liturgical observance**

In the Christian calendar, Easter follows Lent, the period of 40 days (not counting Sundays) before Easter, which traditionally is observed by acts of penance and fasting. Easter is immediately preceded by Holy Week, which includes Maundy Thursday, the commemoration of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples; Good Friday, the day of his Crucifixion; and Holy Saturday, the transition between Crucifixion and Resurrection. Liturgically, Easter comes after the Great Vigil, which was originally observed sometime between sunset on Easter Saturday and sunrise on Easter Sunday. Later it would be celebrated in Western churches on Saturday evening, then on Saturday afternoon, and finally on Sunday morning. In 1955 the Roman Catholic Church set the time for the vigil at 10 PM, which allowed for the Easter mass to be celebrated after midnight. In the Orthodox traditions the vigil continues to be an important liturgical event, while in Protestant churches it is little known.

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By the 4th century the Easter vigil was well established in various liturgical expressions. It was characterized by a spirit of joyful anticipation of the Resurrection and—because of the belief that Jesus’ Second Coming would occur on Easter—the return of Jesus. In the Roman Catholic tradition the vigil has four parts: the celebration of lights focused on the Paschal candle; the service of lessons called the prophecies; the administration of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation to adult converts; and the Easter mass. The use of the Paschal candle, to denote the appearance of light out of darkness through the Resurrection, was first recorded in the year 384; by the 10th century it had gained general usage. The prominence of baptism at Easter goes back to early Christianity, probably the 4th century, when baptism was administered only once a year, at Easter. In the Roman Catholic service the priest blesses the water to be used in the forthcoming year for baptism, with the faithful taking some of that water with them to receive protection from vicissitudes. Lutheran and Anglican churches use variations of this vigil service.


All Christian traditions have their own special liturgical emphases for Easter. The Easter sunrise service, for example, is a distinctive Protestant observance in North America. The practice may derive from the Gospel narrative of Jesus’ Resurrection, which states that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb “while it was still dark” (John 20:1) or as dawn was breaking (Matthew 28:1 and Luke 24:1). It is a service of jubilation that takes place as the sun rises to dispel the darkness.

### **Easter customs**

Easter, like Christmas, has accumulated a great many traditions, some of which have little to do with the Christian celebration of the Resurrection but derive from folk customs. The custom of the Easter lamb appropriates both the appellation used for Jesus in Scripture (“behold the lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world,” John 1:29) and a lamb’s role as a sacrificial animal in ancient Israel. In antiquity Christians placed lamb meat under the altar, had it blessed and then ate it on Easter. Since the 12th century the Lenten fast has ended on Easter with meals including eggs, ham, cheeses, bread, and sweets that have been blessed for the occasion.

The use of painted and decorated Easter eggs was first recorded in the 13th century. The church prohibited the eating of eggs during Holy Week, but chickens continued to lay eggs during that week, and the notion of specially identifying those as “Holy Week” eggs brought about their decoration. The egg itself became a symbol of the Resurrection. Just as Jesus rose from the tomb, the egg symbolizes new life emerging from the eggshell. In the Orthodox tradition eggs are painted red to symbolize the blood Jesus shed on the cross.

Easter egg hunts are popular among children in the United States. First lady Lucy Hayes, the wife of Pres. Rutherford B. Hayes, is often credited with sponsoring the first annual Easter egg roll (an event where children and their parents were invited to roll their eggs on the Monday following Easter) on the White House lawn, in 1878. That year the event was moved to the White House from the grounds of the U.S. Capitol Building, where large numbers of children had gathered beginning in the early 1870s to roll their eggs and play on Easter Monday. Members of Congress were dismayed by the large crowds on Capitol Hill and feared that the foot traffic was damaging the grounds. By 1876 Congress and Pres. Ulysses S. Grant passed a law that forbade the practice of egg rolling on Capitol Hill. Some historical records note that the Hayes first opened the White House lawn to egg rolling festivities the following year, in 1877, after a young boy asked President Hayes directly for permission to use the space.

The custom of associating a rabbit or bunny with Easter arose in Protestant areas in Europe in the 17th century but did not become common until the 19th century. The Easter rabbit is said to lay the eggs as well as decorate and hide them. In the United States the Easter rabbit also leaves children baskets with toys and candies on Easter morning. In a way, this was a manifestation of the Protestant rejection of Catholic Easter customs. In some European countries, however, other animals—in Switzerland the cuckoo, in Westphalia the fox—brought the Easter eggs. 

## **Huntsville Chapter Objectives**

- Promote the aims of the national MOAA organization
- Further the legislative and other objectives of MOAA through grassroots activity
- Foster fraternal relationships among retired, active and former officers of the uniformed services
- Maintain liaison and a positive relationship with the Redstone Arsenal Garrison and other military commands in the Northern Alabama area
- Provide a social venue for members to meet periodically and enjoy fellowship with people of similar interests and backgrounds
- Promote and assist worthy community activities
- Provide useful services and information for members and their dependents and survivors
- Provide representation to the Alabama Council of Chapters of MOAA
- Provide representation to the Northern Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition
- Protect the rights and interests of service retirees and active-duty military members in matters of state legislation through the Alabama Council of Chapters

## **Benefits of Membership**

We are the largest of the 13 chapters in Alabama and have over 320 members. We have been recognized by National MOAA for the last four years with Level of Excellence awards. We provide grassroots support for issues that affect us and are active in both the Redstone Arsenal and Madison County communities. Why should you join our chapter? This is what we do, and what's in it for you:

- Partnership with Redstone Arsenal agencies – Fox Army Health Clinic, Army Community Service, MWR, PX/Commissary, Military Retiree Council
- Membership in the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition (NAVFOC) – plugged in to the larger Veterans associations "big picture"
- Recognizing leadership – JROTC/ROTC awards and "gold bar" ceremonies
- Recognizing potential – Scholarship Awards program with the Redstone Arsenal Military and Civilians Club
- Community service/relations – annual Tut Fann Veterans Home BBQ, Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony, Veterans Day parade and events, Retiree Appreciation Day
- Camaraderie – Monthly meetings & breakfasts, parties, golf tournament
- Information – Monthly newsletter, web site, Personal Affairs, guest speakers
- Legislative action – grassroots activities, support for National MOAA agenda
- Venue for getting involved

Please visit our award-winning chapter website at <http://huntsvillemoaa.org> where you can find out more about chapter activities.

## Attention Members

One of the best sources of income for the Chapter comes from advertisements like the ones in this newsletter. You are the best resource for identifying potential advertisers. The next time you go out to dinner, or to shop, or to get a haircut, or to get your car fixed – ask the business manager if they would consider advertising. Let them know that the newsletter reaches our 320+ members each month. All they can say is “no”.

If they are interested or desire more information, please let Bruce Robinson know, and he will follow up with them. His contact information is [brobinso1976@gmail.com](mailto:brobinso1976@gmail.com) or 256-426-0525.

## Important Dates in April

- 1 April – April Fool’s Day
- 2 April – Ponce de Leon discovered Florida (1513)
- 2 April – The first US Mint was established in Philadelphia (1792)
- 3 April – Pony Express service established (1860)
- 3 April – Confederate capital of Richmond surrendered to Union forces (1865)
- 4 April – Dr. Martin Luther King assassinated (1968)
- 6 April – US entered World War I (1917)
- 8 April – Monthly Breakfast – 0900 – City Café Diner**
- 9 April – The Civil War ended (1865)
- 9 April – Easter Sunday
- 10 April – Bataan death march began (1942)
- 11 April – Civil Rights Act signed into law (1968)
- 11 April – Apollo 13 launched (1970)
- 12 April – The Civil War began (1861)
- 12 April – President Franklin Roosevelt died (1945)
- 12 April - Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in
- 12 April – First space shuttle flight occurred - *Columbia* (1981)
- 13 April – Monthly Board Meeting – 1100 – Java Café**
- 14 April – Golf Meeting – 1200 – The Links**
- 14 April – President Abraham Lincoln shot & mortally wounded (1865)
- 15 April – The *Titanic* sank, killing over 1500 people (1912)
- 18 April – The midnight ride of Paul Revere (1775)
- 18 April – The San Francisco earthquake, killing over 4000 people (1906)
- 18 April – Jimmy Doolittle’s air raid on Tokyo (1942)
- 19 April – The Oklahoma City bombing, killing 168 people (1995)
- 20 April – Columbine High School shooting (1999)
- 21 April – The Red Baron Manfred von Richtofen was shot down & killed (1918)
- 22 April – Earth Day
- 24 April – Library of Congress established (1800)
- 26 April – Monthly Member Meeting – 1100 – Summit Club – Meet & Greet starting at 1030**
- 26 April – Chernobyl nuclear accident (1986)
- 26 April – Nelson Mandela elected president of South Africa (1994)
- 28 April – Mutiny on the *Bounty* (1789)

