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June 2025



Huntsville Chapter
Military Officers Association of America

The Sentinel

Huntsvillemoaa.org



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

Greetings all!

The summer months have officially started. Actually, they started a couple of months ago according to my electricity bill! Time for everyone to be careful out in that very hot sun that peeks out between the rain, lightning, and funnel clouds!

May's membership meeting was a good one. Lots of great information put out by COL Eike with most of it of concern to all of us!

On May 13th, I had the honor of presenting **6 scholarships** to some outstanding young people. This is one of my favorite times of the year and it is such a pleasure to meet these outstanding future Americans. I would like to once again thank the Redstone Arsenal Military and Civilians Club for coordinating this awards event – outstanding as usual!

On May 26th, we presented the Chapter wreath at the Huntsville-Madison County Memorial Day Ceremony. The Chapter was well represented at the ceremony and the efforts of NAVFOC in executing this somber event are greatly appreciated. **Many thanks to Ed Banville** for assisting me with the wreath presentation.

There are no luncheons in June or July. Our next luncheon is Wednesday, August 27th. We are still working to confirm the guest speaker and the luncheon date may need to be flexible. I will keep you all advised.

Planning and preparation for the annual fundraising golf tournament continues. We need help in many forms – I will send out a separate email addressing this request.

As always, many thanks to all of you for being members of the **biggest and BEST MOAA Chapter in Alabama!**

Rick

There are no member meetings in June or July – enjoy your summer!

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



Legislative Corner

COL John Fairlamb, USA-Ret

**Take
Action**

→ <http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/>



Federal Legislation:

The Support Military Families Act (H.R. 977) remains in House committee deliberation.

H.R.1277 and S.596 - Military Spouse Hiring Act— expands the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to include hiring of a qualified military spouse. Employers who hire members of a targeted group can claim a tax credit equal to a portion of the wages paid to those individuals. The bills are MOAA priorities for advocacy action and have gained 11 new cosponsors in the House and three in the Senate since MOAA's spring Advocacy in Action campaign.

The first-ever proposed \$1 trillion defense budget includes **\$150 billion in new spending** that addresses key MOAA priorities, including \$2.9 billion to restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) ending the need for service members to pay 5% of their anticipated housing costs out-of-pocket. The House budget reconciliation bill would also fund improvements to unaccompanied housing, address child care and spouse employment concerns, and add \$2 billion to the DoD health care budget. The House passed the legislation on 22 May and the bill has gone to the Senate.

Congressman Dale Strong's bill focused on countering threats from the Chinese Communist Party, *The SHIELD Against CCP Act*, passed the House of Representatives on March 10 and is in the Senate for consideration. It requires the Department of Homeland Security to establish a working group to assess and report on efforts to counter the CCP's use of nontraditional tactics: the U.S. immigration system, economic and trade practices, support for illicit financial activity and trafficking controlled substances.

The *Tax DODGER Act* targets IRS and other federal employees with tax debt. A whistleblower report found current and former IRS agents owe some \$46 million in taxes. The Act would require the IRS to publish an annual report on tax delinquencies of current and retired federal employees and consider a federal job applicant ineligible for hire if they have "seriously delinquent" tax debt. The bill has yet to pass either the House or Senate.

Alabama Legislation: Note: The 2025 Legislative session ended May 14th. Legislators filed a total of nearly 1,500 bills compared to 843 last year. In total, Ivey signed into law 287 bills and 147 resolutions this year, with every bill originating from her office reaching her desk for final approval.

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2025-2026 GOVERNING BOARD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: CAPT Richard C. West, USN-Ret, 256-776-6901, rickw675@att.net

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Secretary: COL Michael C. Barron, USA-Ret, 337-422-8862, m.barron468@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vacant

Army Representative: LTC Nicholas M. Mikus, USA-Ret, 256-604-7767, nicholasmikus@comcast.net

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

STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership: MAJ Bruce T. Robinson, USA-Ret, 256-426-0525, brobinso1976@gmail.com

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Public Affairs (Publicity): Vacant

Chapter Historian: Vacant

Surviving Spouse Liaison: Vacant

Chapter Hospitality: Vacant

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LIFE MEMBERSHIP TRUST

COL John Fairlamb, USA-Ret, 256-539-0161, fairlambjrf@comcast.net (June 2026)

MAJ Monte C. Washburn, USA-Ret, 256-301-5457, monte@washburns.org (June 2027)

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



PX / Commissary
Col Gerald C. Maxwell, USAFR



Main Exchange

Plan for the Alabama Tax Free weekend! This year it is July 18-20. [Sales Tax Holidays - Alabama Department of Revenue](#) Books priced \$30 or less, clothing priced \$100 or less, computers, computer software, and school computer supplies priced \$750 or less, and school supplies priced \$50 or less. Alabama tax-free weekends apply to state sales tax. Your Exchange is ALWAYS tax free – so the Exchange often deducts the normal outside tax rate from your Exchange purchase for the eligible items.

You can save even more by signing up for the Exchange STAR card! The first day you use it – ALL your purchases (including clearance items) are 10% off on your bill (with occasionally 15% off)! Start your list of purchases now.

Get 0% interest on any sporting goods purchase of \$699 or more with STAR card, as well as 10% off ALL firearms PLUS an extra 5% off if you use your STAR card - valid May 23 - June 15.

The end of June and into July your Exchange usually has exercise clothing, outdoor furniture and grills on sale! Bike, toys, appliances and gun safes also! The next week usually brings home cleaning supplies, luggage, kitchen supplies, linens, TV's, potable charging batteries, pool toys, fans, and Midea appliances. More items available on-line at: <http://shopmyexchange.com>.

Now open inside the restaurant area Taste of Maine – lobster rolls, New England chowder and much more. Also, Malone's Mercantile – candy, bath ideas, and more. Bootleg Candle company – varieties of scented candles. Eden's Pharmacy – herbal apothecary.

At the barber shop – reserve your appointment on line at www.GMEHAIR.com.

Download the Exchange Extra app for your smart phone – ads, specials, coupons, and the super daily special!

Shopette

Stop in every month to see the wine and spirit specials! Plus, check out the Spirits of the Month shelves. New and not so new spirits—most on sale! New Tanteo jalapeno tequila, Lalo tequila, Johnny Walker high rye blended Scotch whisky, Old Parr blended Scotch whisky, Proper Twelve Irish apple whiskey, Clan MacGregor blended Scotch whisky, and Inver House blended Scotch whisky. Plus, check out the numerous craft beers.

Use your STAR card for 5 cents off at the gas pumps and usually more during holidays and service birthdays.

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Need Addresses

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

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

Navy/USMC Representative:
COL Raymond G. Regner
256-851-5903
rgregner58@gmail.com

Air/Space Force Representative:
Col Gerald C. Maxwell
256-606-5282,
avatarmax@gmail.com

Personal Affairs Officer
Lt Col Gerald Haynes
256-882-7857
jerry15@hiwaay.net



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YOU SERVED OUR COUNTRY WELL AND WE WOULD BE HONORED TO SERVE YOU WITH YOUR INSURANCE AND INVESTMENT NEEDS.

Please call our office to set a time for a complimentary one on one meeting with John D. Stover, LUTCF, Certified Financial Planner™, Certified Kingdom Advisor®

8 ARCH STREET
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35806
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

PHONE: 615.591.3937
TOLL-FREE: 888.468.9672
FAX: 615.591.3932

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SIMPLIFY RETIREMENT**

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PENSION SURVIVORSHIP OPTIONS**

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



We have a few new offerings at FAHC that you might be interested in

Other Health Insurance: let Fox know about your other health insurance (OHI) now. Starting in July, the Pharmacy will be required to check for OHI for each prescription filled. This will increase wait times by about 8 minutes for each prescription. Updating your information now will save time when this process begins.

Mind & Body Detox: menopause and perimenopause empowerment class

Walk-in-Wellness: confidential and discreet STI testing

Community Care Connect: an opportunity to speak directly with the FAHC commander, and to hear about our new offerings in person. Join us on June 18th for the next Community Care Connect at 11 AM in the café.

THE MIND AND BODY DETOX
PERI -/ MENOPAUSE EDITION
 A 6- WEEK EMPOWERMENT SERIES FOR WOMEN
 Wednesdays, June 11—July 16
 10:30—11:30 AM
 The Burrow, Fox Army Health Center
 LIMITED TO 10 PARTICIPANTS

Join Dietician, Heather Hough, and IBHC Social Worker Brittany Huey

- Real talk about physical and emotional changes
- Insight rooted in the Army Performance Triad: Sleep, Activity & Nutrition
- Guided movement portions each week
- Tools to help you be kind to yourself and thrive during this life transition

Let's detox the myths, embrace change, and build lifelong wellness!

To register, call the Dietician's office:
 256-955-8888 extension 1294
 Register by June 9, 2025

Investing in Our Future: Supporting Quality Healthcare for All

DO YOU HAVE OTHER HEALTH INSURANCE (OHI)?

- ✔ Avoid billing delays and denied claims.
- ✔ Ensure you're not overpaying for services.
- ✔ Protect your benefits—don't risk gaps in coverage.
- ✔ Helps us serve you better and faster.
- ✔ See improvements in facilities, expanded services, and enhanced care.

**IT'S QUICK.
IT'S EASY.
IT HELPS YOU.**

UPDATE YOUR OHI TODAY AT
 PCMH FRONT DESK OR MEDICAL RECORDS.

Fox Army Health Center
WALK-IN WELLNESS Public Health

"Confidential & Discreet STI Testing—No Provider Visit Required"

How does it work?

1. Go to FAHC Laboratory
2. Select "Walk-in Wellness Testing" at kiosk
3. Lab collects blood & urine samples.
4. Nurse will call and coordinate treatment if positive.

What will I be tested for?

- HIV
- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis Panel

Who can use this service? Any TRICARE Beneficiary who is at least 14, is not pregnant, and has no current symptoms of an STI.

Why should I get tested? Knowing your STI status is an important step in stopping the spread of infection. Unchecked infections can cause more health problems.

When should I get tested? Within one week of unprotected sex with a new partner. At least 28 days after last STI treatment.

Why Get Tested? At least 28 days after STI treatment. **When 1 WEEK after STI treatment.**

See your doctor or go to the ER immediately if you are having:

- Testicle pain
- Abdominal pain
- Pelvic pain
- Fever
- Discharge from penis, vagina, anus

What can you do to protect yourself?

- Use condoms 100%
- Abstain from all sexual activity
- Have sex with just one person that you trust
- Get the HPV vaccine

CONTACT For more information contact:
 Army Public Health Nursing at (256) 955-8888 Ext. 1026 or your PCMH



You've served our country. Let us serve you.
Call to schedule a one-on-one.

Dale C Kuehl, CFP®, AAMS™

Financial Advisor

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

MKT-58940-A-A1 AECSPAD 25217572

2025 Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament

It's that time again. The golf committee will have its next planning meeting on **4 June**, 12 noon, at the Links. Come early for lunch.

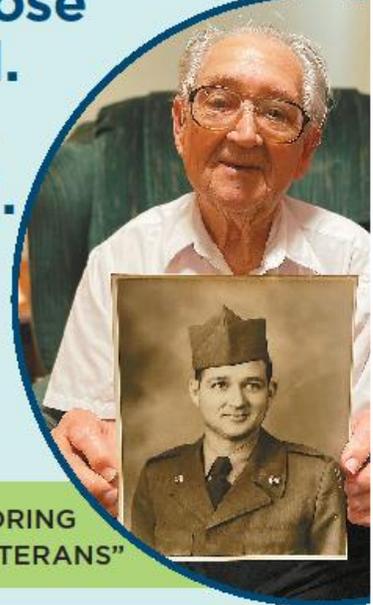
As always, we need volunteers to make the tournament successful.

You don't need to know anything about golf to help.

Some areas where we need volunteers include:

- Contacting local golf courses for donations of free rounds of golf
- Contacting local businesses to be hole sponsors or to donate goods & services
- If you are still working, getting your company to be a sponsor
- Filling one of the numerous staff positions on tournament day
- If a golfer, playing in the tournament & advertising it to others

Choose Well.
Live Well.



"HONORING our VETERANS"

THERE COMES A POINT

A point to live well, love well, BE well.



RESIDENCES
at WELLPOINT

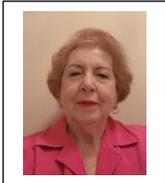
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256-701-8300

2940 MILL RUN ROAD SE
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35763

RESIDENCESATWELLPOINT.COM





Surviving Spouse's Luncheon

Mrs. Bonnie Treadway
256-859-1484

Our next luncheon will be held on Thursday, 19 June, at Phil Sandoval's Mexican Restaurante, 6125 University Drive, Suite 18, Huntsville, AL, 35806.
We meet at 11:00 A.M. All will be notified.

Surviving Spouse Corner: Resources for Caregivers

There are 14.3 million military and veteran caregivers, representing 5.5% of the U.S. adult population, according to a report from Rand. If you find there is a need for a caregiver in your life or if you become a caregiver, know that caregivers are not alone. Many organizations offer information, guidance, and resources. Here are some to consider:

MOAA

Stay in the know about legislation and news affecting the caregiver community by reading the latest articles from MOAA. You can also take action on legislation pertaining to caregivers through MOAA's Legislative Action Center.

One example: The Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act would help close gaps in caregiver financial planning and preparation by providing professional development, employment assistance, and retirement guidance specifically tailored for veteran caregivers. This legislation is critical to ensuring caregivers receive the recognition, support, and financial security they have earned through their service to veterans. Urge your lawmaker to support this bill today.

MOAA also partners with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to provide *Tips for Lifelong Caregiving*.

Elizabeth Dole Foundation

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation addresses "the obstacles our military and veteran caregivers face regularly, from providing access to essential resources and support networks to calling for policy changes." Their initiatives also include the Dole Caregiver Fellowship program and the Hidden Heroes Campaign.

VA Programs

The VA's Caregiver Support Program offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and covered veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. The program's mission is to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our nation's veterans.

Its programs and resources include the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, which offers enhanced clinical support for family caregivers of eligible veterans; Caregiver Support Program Teams, which have expertise in caregiving and, most importantly, are caring professionals; and caregiver health and well-being coaching, a personal guide who will help you develop a personal health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

VA Aid and Attendance, or housebound benefits, provides monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified veterans and survivors.



Chaplain’s Corner
Col Dave McKinney, USAF-Ret

Acts 16:35-40 (New International Version)

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” 36 The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

37 But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

While traveling, Paul and Silas stopped to minister to a slave woman. Her owners had issues and said they were Jews, so he had them arrested and put in jail. While in jail they were arrested and beaten, that is until a violent earthquake rocked the area. And all the prisoner’s chains fell off. The jailer, seeing all that happened, converted to Christianity. The magistrates ordered their release with not so much as a trial. Paul called them on it and said the magistrates should at least lead them out. And then it was learned that Paul and Sila were Roman citizens, which is bad news for the magistrates, so they came and led Paul and Silas out of prison.

Life often takes strange turns. Sometimes we make decisions not always knowing all the facts. How often do you, like the magistrates, make snap decisions without knowing all the facts? If

Continued on page 13

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: 259
Regular Members: 221
Surviving Spouses: 38

New this month: 1
Deaths this month: 1
Renewals: 0

Welcome New Members to Huntsville Chapter MOAA

CDR Tim Craddock, USN

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.

Easier Logins are Coming with myAuth

We are excited to announce a simpler and faster way to access DoD online services! The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) is introducing myAuth, a new login system designed to replace DoD Self-Service Logon (DS Logon) for ID Card Office Online (IDCO) and milConnect starting May 21, 2025.

Think of myAuth as your new key to easily unlock these DoD online services with just one login! myAuth is designed to provide users a secure, efficient, and smoother experience.

Here is what you need to know:

- What is changing? Starting May 21, when you login to IDCO and milConnect, you will be prompted to Create myAuth Account.
- How will it work? To create your myAuth account, you will use your existing DS Logon account. Do not worry! The system will walk you through creating a DS Logon account if you do not have it.
- During Setup: Download the Okta Verify application on your smart phone, where you can set up passwordless authentication for a more secure and frictionless sign-in experience.

Continued on page 19

Commissary/PX – continued from page 3

Commissary

CLICK2GO is one tap away for savings and convenient online shopping. Schedule free curbside pickup from your desktop or mobile devices while shopping online. Download the My Military Savings app on your smart phone to keep up with all the new savings, recipes, and other shopping tips. Check out the military lifestyle podcast Off Duty Happy Hour, where all things military lifestyle are discussed and so much more [Off Duty Happy Hour • A podcast on Spotify for Podcasters](#)

New – at the meat counter – bratwurst pork with elk or bison, or Italian sausage. At the self-checkout counter – premade party and snack trays – very convenient. Check out the specials for your commissary BBQ in the meat isle along with all the extras to make your BBQ the best at [Military Family Coupons | Discounts | Commissary Coupons | My Military Savings](#)

Check out the center of the store for bulk item sales! Big box selection without the big price tag. 🍷

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

Gov. Ivey signed a Joint Resolution Spearheaded by BG Bob Drolet and CW4 Ed Banville of the HCMOAA, and supported by various Alabama Veterans Groups. Joint Resolution 266 designates November 5th through Veterans Day, November 11th, each and every year in the State of Alabama, as **Veterans Week**.

Major bills that passed:

Gov. Ivey signed Alabama’s [budgets for the 2026 fiscal year](#). The Education Trust Fund (ETF) will provide nearly \$10 billion in funding for the state’s various education programs and agencies, and is a 6% increase over the previous year. The General Fund budget totals \$3.7 billion for the 2026 fiscal year, a 10% increase (\$347 million) over the current budget. Both budgets go into effect October 1.

The ETF budget includes a \$99.2 million increase for the Public Education Employees’ Health Insurance Plan. There are no pay raises for education employees in the budget. It also includes \$9.6 million to support a newly enacted parental leave policy for state and education staff and \$15.6 million designated for an employee injury compensation program. The budget also provides \$180 million for the CHOOSE Act, a voucher-like program that provides tax credits for nonpublic education expenses, including private school tuition.

The General Fund budget includes a \$223.8 million (19%) increase over the current year for the Medicaid Agency, totaling \$1.18 billion; a \$90.1 million (11%) increase for the Alabama Department of Corrections, for a total of \$826.7 million; a \$4.7 million (3%) increase for the Alabama Department of Human Resources, totaling \$148.9 million; and a \$4.7 million (2%) increase for the Alabama Department of Mental Health totaling \$244 million.

Reduction in tax on food and other tax bills: For the second time in three years, lawmakers knocked a penny off of the state’s sales tax on most grocery items, bringing it to 2% starting Sept. 1. Legislators also ended the “pink tax,” removing the **sales tax from feminine hygiene products**, maternity items and baby goods, including diapers and formula. The tax cut on groceries came instead of extending a 2023 law that took the state’s income tax off of hourly workers’ overtime earnings. That bill cost more than expected and Legislators said the grocery bill, though fiscally smaller, would reach more people.

Parental leave and workers’ comp: Alabama teachers and state employees now have **paid parental leave**. Mothers will be granted eight weeks after the birth of a child and fathers two weeks. Teachers and state employees would receive 100% of their base pay while on leave, with the benefit extending to parents adopting a child less than three years old.

Pharmacy payment bill: Gov. Ivey signed [SB 252](#) known as “The Community Pharmacy Relief Act that prohibits Pharmacy Benefit Managers, or PBMs, from paying pharmacists less than Medicaid does and from charging miscellaneous fees. PBMs are essentially middlemen that manage prescription benefits between insurance companies and employers. PBMs now must reimburse independent pharmacies an amount equal to or above what is paid by the Alabama Medicaid Agency that includes a dispensing fee of \$10.64 per prescription.



Huntsville Chapter
 Military Officers Association of America
 P.O. Box 1301 - Huntsville, AL 35807
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 1st 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			

Recruiting

You are the best recruiting tool the Chapter has. Tell your eligible friends & associates about our Chapter – the best in Alabama. We have the lowest membership rate in the country at \$10. One can also sign up for multiple years.

Direct questions to MAJ Bruce Robinson at 256-426-0525 or brobinso1976@gmail.com.

We also offer a Chapter Life Membership – COL John Fairlamb - 256-539-0161 or fairlambjrf@comcast.net - has the details.

Spread the word!

A Privatized Commissary System

While recent DoD guidance suggests commissaries could be “[prioritized for privatization](#),” the need to preserve the critical service-earned benefits provided by these stores outweighs potential savings found by turning them over to a for-profit enterprise.

Such a move would risk a benefit that allows young military families to make ends meet and allows retirees, disabled veterans, and survivors to keep up with rising costs.

Just as important under the existing budget climate, commissaries have shown an impressive return on investment: A former Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) director [cited FY 2023 figures](#) showing \$1.58 billion in savings by military families provided by \$1.421 billion in funding.

MOAA has long championed the need to protect the commissary benefit. [In 2016 testimony](#) to a House Armed Services Committee panel on military personnel, we broke down the numbers: Taxpayer funding for the commissary program was equivalent to a 2% across-the-board military raise, but the monetary value of the benefit for an E-5 with eight years of service and a family of four equaled a 9% raise. Younger members would find even greater savings, and those figures don’t include financial relief provided to retirees and survivors.

The DoD Directive

[An April 7 memo](#) from Deputy Defense Secretary Steve Feinberg outlined “Guiding Principles for the Department of Defense Workforce Optimization,” with the goal of aligning “every part of our organization around the needs of the warfighter.”

The final recommendation offered: “All functions that are not inherently governmental (e.g., retail sales and recreation) should be prioritized for privatization.”

MOAA argues the retail sales associated with the commissary benefit are critical to the needs of the warfighter:

- **Financial Strength:** The financial benefit provided by these stores – by law, shoppers must save 23.7% compared with civilian outfits – is a key part of the compensation provided to those who serve. Privatization risks putting profit over the needs of these members and their families.
- **Global Presence:** The commissary offers a global network of 235 stores, all with the foremost obligation to serve those in uniform and their families. Servicemembers stationed on every corner of the globe can get a piece of home at a fair price – a key pillar of family readiness.
- **Commitment to Honoring Service:** A strong commissary system continues providing benefits well after service, helping keep the promise of taking care of all in uniform, their families, and their survivors.

Continued on page 16



24 Birthdays in June

CPT Rene E Lemieux, USA
LTC Stephen D Rice, USA
LTC Roderic Spencer, USA
Mrs. Florence L Garman
CW3 Lewis F Spencer Jr, USA
COL Perry C Butler, USA
CAPT Veronica A Brecht, USCG
CWO Richard C Demming, USA
MAJ Sherrill T Chaffin, USA
Mrs. Freddia K Scott
Mrs. Nora Taylor
LTC Gary R Young, USA

Mrs. Helen J Kolankiewicz
MAJ Michael V Tallman, USA
CDR Rudolph M Ohme, USN
MAJ John F Wilson Jr, USA
Capt Kenneth E Shepard, USAF
COL John A Olshefski, USA
CDR Robert P Rolf, USN
LTC Johanna L Mora, USA
Col Bernard S Morgan Jr, USAF
LTC William L Brigadier, USA
CW4 William W Wright, USA
CAPT Ronald L Stowe, USN

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 so it can be included in future newsletters. Thank you.

Chaplain's Corner – continued from page 8

you're like me you've done it plenty of times. And sometimes with disastrous results, like having Paul and Silas thrown into prison. What do you do? Try to make it right quietly like the magistrates tried to do? Be forced into making it right like the magistrates had to do at Paul's request? Or do you work to make it right once you've realized you made a mistake? Lord, help us to walk in your light, taking time to know the facts on decisions we are called on to make.

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

Blessings, Dave





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

TAPS

Mrs. Ann Eittreim of Huntsville, Alabama, passed away in the early hours of July 5, 2019. Ann was born in 1938 to Rachel and David Neiswanger of Austin, Minnesota. She grew up in Austin, leaving to attend college in Decorah, Iowa.

While at college, she met and later married Kinley Eittreim. Ann was a very active member of various bands while in High School and College. She played the piccolo and flute and was a proud member of her High School band and the Luther College Concert Band.

Ann served for many years as an active member of the churches her husband served as pastor. She enjoyed entertaining, traveling, and a variety of social activities. At various times during her life, she worked as a school teacher, a Census taker, an appellate court clerk, a bookkeeper, and a laboratory technician.

She enjoyed numerous hobbies and activities. Her family was very important to her and she worked to maintain a close relationship with her children and grandchildren. She is survived by her daughter Susan Eittreim Power and her son Mark Owen Eittreim, as well as 2 brothers and a sister, 2 sisters in law, 2 grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was 80 years old. A memorial for Ann was held at Ridout's Valley Chapel in Homewood, AL on July 30, 2019.

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

We will miss these outstanding Leaders and Patriots.



Medicare and Mental Health

Mental health & substance use disorders

Medicare covers certain screenings, services, and programs that aid in the treatment and recovery of mental health and substance use disorders.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988, the free and confidential Suicide Crisis Lifeline. You can call and speak with a trained crisis counselor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also connect with a counselor through web chat at 988lifeline.org. Call 911 if you're in immediate medical crisis.

Services & programs Medicare covers

Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance)

Services you get when you're admitted to a general or psychiatric hospital as an inpatient.

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)

- Inpatient services you get from a doctor or other health care provider while you're in the hospital.
- Intensive outpatient program services you get at a hospital, community mental health center, Federally Qualified Health Center, Rural Health Clinic, or Opioid Treatment Program.
- Outpatient services that you usually get outside a hospital, like in a doctor's office or community mental health center. This includes outpatient services you might get as part of substance use disorder treatment.
- Partial hospitalization services you get through a hospital outpatient department or community mental health center, if you meet certain requirements.
- Behavioral health integration services to help manage your care for your health condition.

Medicare drug coverage (Part D)

Many outpatient prescription drugs you may need to treat a mental health condition.

If you're eligible for Medicare and Medicaid you may have even more coverage than what's listed here. Call your State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office to find out what other health services may be covered in your state.

Types of mental health care

Outpatient Mental Health Care

Services to help diagnose and treat mental health conditions (often called counseling or psychotherapy).

Intensive Outpatient Program Services

Part-time mental health care for people who need at least 9 hours of services per week.

Partial Hospitalization

Full-day mental health care for people who need at least 20 hours of services per week.

Inpatient Care

Mental health care services when you're admitted to a general or psychiatric hospital

Continued on next page

Commissary – continued from page 12

These priorities can be achieved under the current system without the need to privatize. Commissary leaders are already making plans to become “a commercial grocery chain that happens to work for the Department of Defense,” [DeCA director John Hall said April 22](#) at a meeting of the American Logistics Association. “By that I mean we’ll offer all the [products and services](#), all those good things you see in a good commercial grocery chain, and while doing that, we’re going to continue to deliver 25% savings.”

Tools [like variable pricing](#) will help the agency reach this goal. MOAA looks forward to working DeCA officials in keeping the needs of the warfighter as the agency’s top priority.

Lessons of Privatization

While a privatized system may result in short-term savings, past experience suggests the potential for long-term problems. Changes to military housing in the 1990s created a public-private partnership as a way to tackle an ever-growing maintenance backlog, but complaints about unsafe conditions continued, reaching a peak with a [Reuters investigation in 2019](#) that prompted congressionally mandated reforms.

Those efforts, with MOAA support, [continue in the 119th Congress](#) – about 30 years after the privatization took shape.

DoD officials can avoid similar problems by strengthening DeCA and allowing it to continue providing much-needed, service-earned savings to commissary shoppers. 

Mental Health – continued from previous page

Preventive screenings & counseling

Depression screenings

Assesses signs and symptoms of depression.

Opioid Use Disorder Treatments

Counseling, therapy, assessments, and more to help recover from opioid use disorder.

Tobacco Use Counseling

Counseling for smoking and tobacco use cessation.

Alcohol Misuse Screenings

To identify unhealthy drinking habits and counseling needs.

Find a mental health care provider

Find and compare providers for mental health and substance use disorder services near you. These providers can help to help treat conditions like depression, anxiety, or substance use disorders. Some providers may offer these services via telehealth, which allows you to communicate in real-time with your health care provider without going to the doctor’s office. Get information about covered telehealth services. 

History of Father's Day

The nation's first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, in the state of Washington. However, it was not until 1972—58 years after President Woodrow Wilson made Mother's Day official—that the day honoring fathers became a nationwide holiday in the United States. Father's Day 2025 will occur on Sunday, June 15.

Mother's Day: Inspiration for Father's Day

The "[Mother's Day](#)" we celebrate today has its origins in the peace-and-reconciliation campaigns of the post-[Civil War](#) era. During the 1860s, at the urging of activist Ann Reeves Jarvis, one divided [West Virginia](#) town celebrated "Mother's Work Days" that brought together the mothers of Confederate and Union soldiers.

However, Mother's Day did not become a commercial holiday until 1908, when—inspired by Jarvis's daughter, [Anna Jarvis](#), who wanted to honor her own mother by making Mother's Day a national holiday—the John Wanamaker department store in Philadelphia sponsored a service dedicated to mothers in its auditorium.

Thanks in large part to this association with retailers, who saw great potential for profit in the holiday, Mother's Day caught on right away. In 1909, 45 states observed the day, and in 1914, President [Woodrow Wilson](#) approved a resolution that made the second Sunday in May a holiday in honor of "that tender, gentle army, the mothers of America."

Origins of Father's Day

The campaign to celebrate the nation's fathers did not meet with the same enthusiasm—perhaps because, as one florist explained, "fathers haven't the same sentimental appeal that mothers have."

On July 5, 1908, a West Virginia church sponsored the nation's first event explicitly in honor of fathers, a Sunday sermon in memory of the 362 men who had died in the previous December's explosions at the Fairmont Coal Company mines in Monongah, but it was a one-time commemoration and not an annual holiday.

The next year, a Spokane, [Washington](#), woman named Sonora Smart Dodd, one of six children raised by a widower, tried to establish an official equivalent to Mother's Day for male parents. She went to local churches, the YMCA, shopkeepers and government officials to drum up support for her idea, and she was successful: Washington State celebrated the nation's first statewide Father's Day on June 19, 1910.

Slowly, the holiday spread. In 1916, President Wilson honored the day by using telegraph signals to unfurl a flag in Spokane when he pressed a button in [Washington, D.C.](#) In 1924, President [Calvin Coolidge](#) urged state governments to observe Father's Day.

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Chapter Happenings



(Left) Chapter Member Audrey Ransom presents MOAA JROTC Award to Athens HS Cadet Avery Foster



(Right) Chapter Member Dave Dunlap presents MOAA JROTC Award to Decatur HS Cadet Joseph Wright



MG Lowrey, Chapter President Rick West and the 2025 HCMOAA Scholarship Award winners!



Chapter Members Sam Scruggs, Ed Banville, and Rick West presenting the Chapter wreath at the Huntsville-Madison County Memorial Day Ceremony



COL Erin Eike, Redstone Arsenal Garrison Commander, addresses the membership



COL Eike receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Chapter President Rick West

Father's Day – continued from page 17

In other countries—especially in Europe and Latin America—fathers are honored on St. Joseph's Day, a traditional Catholic holiday that falls on March 19.

Father's Day: Controversy and Commercialism

Many men, however, continued to disdain the day. As one historian writes, they “scoffed at the holiday’s sentimental attempts to domesticate manliness with flowers and gift-giving, or they derided the proliferation of such holidays as a commercial gimmick to sell more products—often paid for by the father himself.”

During the 1920s and 1930s, a movement arose to scrap Mother's Day and Father's Day altogether in favor of a single holiday, Parents' Day. Every year on Mother's Day, pro-Parents' Day groups rallied in [New York City](#)'s Central Park—a public reminder, said Parents' Day activist and radio performer Robert Spere, “that both parents should be loved and respected together.”

Paradoxically, however, the [Great Depression](#) derailed this effort to combine and de-commercialize the holidays. Struggling retailers and advertisers redoubled their efforts to make Father's Day a “second [Christmas](#)” for men, promoting goods such as neckties, hats, socks, pipes and tobacco, golf clubs and other sporting goods, and greeting cards.

When [World War II](#) began, advertisers began to argue that celebrating Father's Day was a way to honor American troops and support the war effort. By the end of the war, Father's Day may not have been a federal holiday, but it was a national institution.

In 1972, in the middle of a hard-fought presidential re-election campaign, [Richard Nixon](#) signed a proclamation making Father's Day a federal holiday at last. Today, economists estimate that Americans spend more than \$1 billion each year on Father's Day gifts. ■■■

myAuth – continued from page 9

Your security is our top priority! Please remember these important tips:

- Be cautious of suspicious messages or calls. Always verify the contact information of the organization before responding, clicking on links, or opening attachments.
- Never share your password or personal information in response to unsolicited emails, text messages, or calls.
- Exercise caution when clicking on links or opening attachments in emails. Always verify the legitimacy of the sender and the URL prior to clicking on a link or downloading content.

DoD, DMDC, and myAuth will NEVER:

- Call you to ask you to respond to a text or for your password.
- Contact you to take control of your computer.

Thank you for your patience as we work to improve your user experience! ■■■

Anti-crime bills: A bill to expand law enforcement officers' civil and criminal immunity was a key piece of Gov. Ivey's priority anti-crime package. [House Bill 202](#), was passed in the session's final minutes and Gov. Ivey signed the bill.

Another significant part of the governor's anti-crime package, [Senate Bill 116](#) banning at the state level devices known as Glock switches, firearm modifications that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire at rates similar to that of fully-automatic weapons, was signed by the governor early in the session.

Other enacted legislation in the eight-bill package were: [House Bill 199](#) expanding electronic monitoring for juvenile delinquents. [Senate Bill 115](#) enhancing criminal penalties for impersonating an officer. [Senate Bill 118](#) placing a constitutional amendment on the 2026 statewide primary election ballot that would expand the list of criminal offenses for which judges may deny bail such as acts of shooting into occupied dwellings and conspiring to commit murder. [Senate Bill 119](#) enhances criminal penalties for various crimes when a firearm is involved.

Immigration bills: Nearly a dozen bills targeting illegal immigration were introduced in the session, but only a few crossed the finish line because they became less of a priority since the Trump administration is tackling immigration at the federal level. The Legislature passed [SB 53](#) requiring local law enforcement to verify arrested individuals' immigration status and criminalizes the transportation of undocumented immigrants into the state. [Senate Bills 158](#), and [Senate Bill 63](#), strengthen laws prohibiting undocumented immigrants from voting and require law enforcement to collect DNA samples from undocumented immigrants in custody.

Lawmakers gave final approval to a possible additional \$500 million loan for prison construction. Previous plans to build two new 4,000-bed prisons, the first one under construction in Elmore County, has cost just over \$1 billion more than expected leaving state leaders looking for more money for the prison in Escambia County.

Juneteenth will be an official state holiday Gov. Ivey signed [HB 165](#) making Juneteenth a state holiday in Alabama. State government offices will be closed on June 19 for the holiday which celebrates the end of slavery in the U.S. The bill passed on a 13-5 vote; nearly half of the Senate body abstained from voting. It's been a federal holiday since 2021 and this bill makes it an official holiday for state workers.

Starting in October, all smartphones and tablets will be required to have obscene content filters automatically enabled for minors via [Senate Bill 186](#). The legislation was designed to guard minors from obscene, sexual and graphic content accessible via smart devices. Enforcement mechanisms are strict, with manufacturers facing civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation, capped at \$50,000.

Proposals that got attention but failed to pass:

Overtime and other tax cuts: Since 2024, hourly workers have not been taxed on overtime work but that expires at the end of June as lawmakers did not extend the cut that proved much more expensive than estimated in 2023.

Continued on next page

The Senate opted not to pass other tax cuts, including proposals to double the state’s income tax exemption from \$6,000 to \$12,000 for individuals 65 years old or older who withdraw funds from a defined contribution retirement plan, and raising the standard deduction from \$2,500 to \$3,000 for individuals.

Gambling/Lottery: No lottery bill could gain traction this year. And, a contentious issue for more than a decade, it’s doubtful a gambling bill will be on the agenda next session when all members of the Legislature are up for reelection.

Expanded availability of ready-to-drink spirits: To the disappointment of both retailers and Alabamians who enjoy ready-to-drink (RTD) spirits, a years-long effort to expand the availability of premixed, canned cocktails died this year. RTD spirits are only available for purchase at liquor stores and the bill would have allowed the drinks to be sold at grocery and convenience stores.

App store age verification bill dies, while companion bill becomes law: While a [bill](#) requiring all smartphones and tablets to have obscene content filters automatically enabled for minors was signed into law by Gov. Ivey, its [companion bill](#), which would require app stores to verify a user’s age before granting unrestricted access failed to pass.

Drag show ban in public libraries: Efforts to prohibit drag shows in public libraries failed to reach Ivey’s desk this year.

Gender ideology discussion ban in public schools: Sometimes referred to as the ‘don’t say gay’ bill, [House Bill 244](#) that would have prohibited gender ideology or sexual orientation instruction at public schools failed to pass.

Parole reform: A years-long effort to reform Alabama’s Board of Pardons and Paroles failed this year. The Pardons and Paroles Board has faced renewed scrutiny in recent months after its chair, Leigh Gathney, was [grilled by lawmakers](#) last year for the board’s failure to adhere to its own guidelines and update those guidelines as required by law. Since Gwathney took over as chair, the board’s parole grant rate declined from 53% in 2018 to [just 8%](#) in 2023, a rate far below the recommended grant rate.

Law enforcement scholarship program: Part of the public safety priorities for Ivey was [House Bill 188](#), which would have established a scholarship program for law enforcement officers and their families, failed to come up for a vote amid hours of filibustering from Senate Democrats. The bill would have covered up to \$3,000 per academic period for tuition and required educational expenses, and would be available to children and spouses of eligible members of law enforcement and was one part of Ivey’s [anti-crime bill package](#), and the only item that failed to reach her desk.

Religious instruction during the school day: A high-profile bill backed by Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth to require public schools to allow release time for religious instruction failed despite passing the Senate. The bill would have changed [a 2019 law that lets local school boards permit religious release time](#) making it mandatory by replacing “may” with “shall.” The bill stalled amid concerns about local control and instructional time. The 2019 law already [allows such policies](#), though many districts have chosen not to adopt them. III

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 250 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 nearly 300 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 or 256-426-0525.

Important Dates in June

- 3 June - The Duke of Windsor married Wallis Warfield Simpson (1937)
- 4 June – Rome liberated by US 5th Army (1944)
- 4 June - A train wreck in Jessore, Bangladesh, killed 76 and injured over 500 (1972)
- 4 June – Chinese troops fire on unarmed protesters in Tiananmen Square in Beijing (1989)
- 4 June – Golf Meeting – Links – 1200**
- 5 June - Robert F Kennedy shot & mortally wounded (1968)
- 6 June - D-Day (1944)
- 6 June - California voters approved Proposition 13, severely limiting property tax rates (1978)
- 8 June – Apache leader Cochise died (1874)
- 9 June - The British signed a 99-year lease for Hong Kong (1898)
- 11 June - Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines erupted (1991)
- 11 June - The Soviet military occupation of East Germany ended (1994)
- 12 June - The Philippines declared their independence from Spain (1898)
- 12 June - Civil rights leader Medgar Evers was assassinated (1963)
- 12 June – Monthly Board Meeting – 1100 – Java Café**
- 13 June - *The New York Times* began publishing the Pentagon Papers (1971)
- 14 June – Continental Army established (1775)
- 14 June - Warren G. Harding became the first President to broadcast a message over the radio (1922)
- 14 June - Univac 1, the world's first commercial electronic computer was unveiled (1951)
- 15 June – Father’s Day
- 17 June – Watergate burglary (1972)
- 18 June – Battle of Waterloo (1815)
- 19 June - Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed (1953)
- 20 June – First day of summer
- 21 June – Tut Fann BBQ - 1100**
- 22 June – Hitler invaded Russia (1941)
- 24 June – Berlin Blockade established (1948)
- 25 June – Custer’s last stand (1876)
- 25 June – Korean War began (1950)
- 26 June - The United Nations Charter was signed (1945)
- 28 June – World War I ended (1919)
- 28 June - Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo (1914)

