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May 2025



Huntsville Chapter
Military Officers Association of America

The Sentinel

Huntsvillemoaa.org



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

Greetings all!

April Showers have passed and now it is time for May Flowers! Or weeds in my case! Just love a "Country Lawn"!

April's membership meeting was very impressive. Nothing like a bunch of young folks taking their next step in life as military officers...and a big step that is! Many thanks to MG Boles for stepping up to start these young adults out on their journey!

Our next luncheon is Wednesday, May 28th. See details on page 17. Our scheduled Guest Speaker will be COL Erin Eike, USA – the Redstone Arsenal Garrison Commander. COL Eike will be presenting an update on the Arsenal...this should be interesting based on all the announcements and rumors floating around regarding command and organizational relocations. Please RSVP now! **RSVP to John Vanderbleek at jvbleek78@gmail.com or 256.893.1565.** Family, friends, and guests are always welcome. As always, we have two goals for this meeting: (1) fill the Bob Howell room to the brim! and (2) **RSVP EARLY** to keep Rick's blood pressure down! 😊

The chapter has several events working in the next few months, including our Golf Tournament, the Memorial Day Ceremony, the Tut Fann BBQ for the Vets, and others. I will keep you informed via emails regarding these events.

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

Rick

The next member meeting is on 28 May – the guest speaker is COL Erin Eike, Redstone Arsenal Garrison Commander

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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. The bill ensures military spouses shall be exempt from requirements to return to full-time in-person work and may engage in telework or remote work making job portability possible.

H.R.1277 — the Promote Military Spouse Act, expands the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to include the hiring of a qualified military spouse. The WOTC permits employers who hire individuals who are members of a targeted group such as qualified veterans or long-term unemployment recipients to claim a tax credit equal to a portion of the wages paid to those individuals. The bill remains in committee and is one of 5 MOAA priorities for advocacy action.

A bill was introduced in the House that would require congressional approval for all new tariffs. The Act would permanently turn off the new 10% baseline tariffs on all countries, tariffs on Mexico and Canada, and the higher tariffs imposed on some countries that are currently paused. Senate action is unlikely.

A joint resolution reversing a Biden administration rule on natural gas water heaters passed the senate and is headed to President Trump's desk. The legislation repeals a Department of Energy rule that set higher efficiency standards for certain natural gas water heaters.

The *Tax DODGER Act* introduced in the senate targets IRS and other federal employees with tax debt. The bill establishes a new section in the law that could consider a federal job applicant ineligible for hire if they have "seriously delinquent" tax debt. A whistleblower report found current and former IRS agents owe some \$46 million in taxes. The Tax DODGER Act would require the IRS to publish an annual report on tax delinquencies of current and retired federal employees.

Alabama Legislation: Note: The 2025 Legislative session began February 4th and is limited to 30 meeting days (normally 2 each week) in a 105 day period. Currently at the 23rd meeting day, there here have been 891 bills filed; the House has passed 277 bills, the Senate has only passed 119; 37 House bills and 49 Senate bills have received final passage.

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2025-2026 GOVERNING BOARD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

1st Vice President: CW4 Edward J. Banville, USA-Ret, 256-683-4127, ed.banville@hotmail.com

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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

Programs: COL John Vanderbleek, USA-Ret, 256-893-1565, jvbleek78@gmail.com

Legislative Affairs: COL John Fairlamb, USA-Ret, 256-539-0161, fairlambjrf@comcast.net

Personal Affairs: Lt Col Gerald Haynes, USAF-Ret, 256-882-7857, jerry15@hiwaay.net

Public Affairs (Publicity): Vacant

Chapter Historian: Vacant

Surviving Spouse Liaison: Vacant

Chapter Hospitality: Vacant

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Chapter Chaplain: Col Dave McKinney, USAF-Ret, 334-467-6860, mckinnewd@gmail.com

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

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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

Your main Exchange is ready for all your spring outdoor activities! Grills, lawn chemicals, pruning, lawn mowers – you name it! Plus, many items on sale!

Your Exchange has computers – on sale! Microsoft Office 365 for 5 people for a year and half with 1TB storage – has increased in price to \$99.

Your Exchange always has a variety of televisions on sale many in the store and many more available on line at: <http://shopmyexchange.com>

Your Exchange has clothing items on clearance in men’s, women’s and children. Most are 25% off with the occasional additional percentage off (and sometimes even more if you use your STAR card). If you don’t have a STAR card, apply for one and ALL your first day purchases are an additional 10% off!

The Exchange has started their plant sale outside. Ready to start that Spring clean-up of your yard? The Main Exchange has the yard care tools, fertilizers, mulch and top soils you require. Start your yard off right by getting rid of all the weeds and feed the grass at the same time.

After the yard work, get ready for Memorial Day activities by throwing some BBQ on the smoker or grill. From apartment size to having the neighborhood block party – your Exchange can make you king of the grill.

As always shop early for best selection.

Shopette

Your Express has your favorite and new offerings of beer, liquor, and various spirits.

Check out the wines of the Month, Spirit of the Month, and Limited Time Specials. Hornito pure agave clear tequila and Jack Daniel’s in several varieties have a display by the beer refrigerators.

New is Johnnie Walker High Rye blended scotch whisky, Grand Old Parr aged 12 years blended Scotch Whisky, and Tullamore D.E.W. Honey Blended Irish Whisky

Remember, you still get 5 cents off your gas at the gas pumps when using your STAR card. There is usually even more off for the Memorial Day weekend. While there, check your tire pressure at the FREE tire pressure stand.

Continued on page 9

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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GERMI CLOUD,
NSSA, CRPC
VICE PRESIDENT, WEALTH ADVISOR
256-715-0094
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Fox Army Health Center MAJ Bruce T. Robinson, USA-Ret



Fox Army Health Center now has an integrated Behavioral Health Consultant (BHC) working with the primary care team. BHC's are specially trained psychologists or social workers who focus on helping patients develop healthy behaviors or change current behaviors that interfere with overall health and well-being.

All are invited to Community Care Connect, a patient town hall on 3rd Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in the Fox café. The town hall is your opportunity to speak directly with the commander about your healthcare experience and to hear his updates on upcoming advancements and changes. We also provide education on several topics of interest to our beneficiaries like diabetic nutrition, TRICARE Young Adult options, and volunteering with the Red Cross. The next Community Care Connect is May 21, 2025. Please join us!

Do you need help with the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal? Hands-on training sessions are available! Contact Heather Hill at 256-955-8888 x 1635 or heather.s.hill4.civ@health.mil.

Fox Army Health Center will close at noon on May 16th for our quarterly staff Town Hall. This includes the lab and pharmacy. There will be no healthcare appointments after 11:30 a.m. Please arrive to the lab or pharmacy by 11:30 if you need those services.

Have you downloaded the My Army Post App yet? It's the new app that has replaced Digital Garrison. Download on Google Play or the App Store and choose Redstone Arsenal.

The Fox laboratory closes every 1st and 3rd Friday at noon for training. Please arrive by 11:30 a.m. if you need labs drawn on those days.

FOX ARMY HEALTH CENTER

PATIENT PORTAL TRAINING

We will help you learn important skills such as how to access your health records, how to communicate with your care team, how to schedule appointments online, and how to utilize virtual appointments.

CONTACT US

256-955-8888 x 1635 | heather.s.hill4.civ@health.mil

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**Fox Army Health Center
Café
Wednesday, May 21
11 a.m.**

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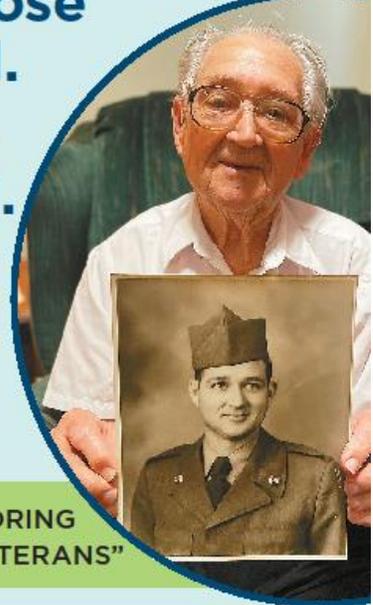
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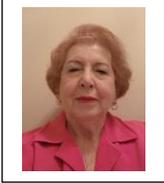
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Surviving Spouse's Luncheon

Mrs. Bonnie Treadway
256-859-1484

Our next luncheon will be held on Thursday, 15 May, at First Watch Restaurant, 8156 Hwy 72 W., in Madison. Phone 256-289-2006. We gather at 11:00 A.M. All will be notified.

Surviving Spouse Corner: Improve Your Mental Skills with These Brain Exercises

Most of us have noticed a mental decline in a close friend or family member. Perhaps they don't seem as sharp, witty, or speedy as they once were.

You might wonder whether others are noticing this with you as well.

Mental decline is not just a phenomenon of aging. Stress, emotions, and poor diet and sleep reduce cognitive skills and affect all ages.

If you have had a stroke or a brain injury, or if you are concerned about a perceived mental decline, speak to your family doctor. If the doctor recognizes an issue, a neurologist can provide a detailed cognitive skills evaluation.

Physical health and emotional health correlate with mental health. If you are consumed with grief or anxiety or dealing with a disease, deal with that first. If serious grieving extends more than two years, seek grief counseling for help. Complicated grief is seen in 9% of widows ages 60 to 75. A smaller percentage of men are affected.

If you want to improve your mental skills, try adding mental strengthening exercises into daily activities, such as:

- **Recall.** Practice memorizing names, phone numbers, vocabulary words, baseball standings, NCAA March Madness lineups, or TV program schedules. Look at a magazine photo for a few seconds, close your eyes, and try to recall items in the photo.
- **Analysis.** Read a newspaper article. Set it aside, then try to write a recap or summary of the article. Try to remember the who, what, when, where, and why.
- **Spatial.** Rearrange a linen closet, pantry, or garage. Look for the most pragmatic and yet economical use of space. Do the same exercise with drawers in kitchen, bed, or bath. While you're at it, set aside some donation items and throw out expired items.

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Chaplain's Corner
Col Dave McKinney, USAF-Ret

Psalm 121: 5-8

5 The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
6 the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.



Every time I watch the news, I see the really stressed world we live in, one that seems so very polarized right now. Seems like everyone is having issues. I see those who are homeless seeking help, children who've gone missing, and people who lost much to natural disasters among other things. With all this heartache it's hard not to be stressed out. When I talk with friends and acquaintances, I hear how this stress we hear in the news is adding to their lives.

How do we live worrying about the issues we continually hear about that are being magnified by the world we live in? It leaves many living in a constant state of fear. But we do not need to be fearful. Jesus conquered the last enemy, death, with His resurrection, which we celebrate on Easter Sunday. And we continue to celebrate His resurrection for 40 days.

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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: 281
Regular Members: 241
Surviving Spouses: 40

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

Welcome New Members to Huntsville Chapter MOAA

**CDR Timothy Craddock,
USN (Ret.)**

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.

Surviving Spouse – continued from page 7

- **Social.** Have a conversation every day. If you live alone, this might be a challenge. Practice small talk at the checkout line of stores. Initiate a phone call or an invitation. This is a must. Accept any invitations you receive. Try to remember a joke you can tell at your next social event.
- **Focus.** Stay focused on whatever activity you are engaged. It might be a conversation, gardening, dancing, chores, or workouts at the gym. Focus on listening, strength, the number of repetitions, muscles involved, posture, and breathing. Be in one with your thoughts. Meditation and prayer are very good options of mental focus.
- **Fun and games.** This can be all manner of social get-togethers. But there are some good solitary options. Jigsaw puzzles provide color and form discernment. Manipulation of the pieces is also good hand-eye coordination practice. Sudoku uses number grids, but it is not a math game. It is a logic exercise. Start with easy grids, and progress to expert status. Using computer sites, you can play Bridge, Gin Rummy, or Hearts with robots. These games require a memory of cards played and the counted. |||

Commissary/PX – continued from page 3

Commissary

For your Memorial Day BBQ - steaks and chops – check out the prices at your Commissary! Plus, a huge selection of sauces, rubs, and spices – and enough foil and storage containers to put it all in when you are done! They also have pork bellies you can smoke and slice (or ask them to slice it for you) for your own bacon.

Snacks, breads, and unusual food items from around the world – all at your commissary in the international isle. Download the Commissary Rewards mobile app (on Google Play and the App Store) today. No more clipping coupons, save time and money with the Commissary Rewards card! Pick up your card at any Commissary location worldwide and register it. Go to <https://shop.commissaries.com> and sign into your account. Be sure to update your profile and set your store. Plus, your Commissary has selected special coupons for our customers to help you make the most of your benefit! |||

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

Legislative – continued from page 2

With 7 days left in the legislative session here's what's still in the mix: Bills on police immunity, immigration, and tax cuts are among those still pending. Others still in the mix would regulate devices and app stores to try to protect children from porn, regulate and tax gummies and drinks containing the marijuana chemical THC, allow the Alabama Farmers Federation to establish an unregulated health care plan for its members, and require public schools to post the Ten Commandments.

The session must end by May 19, but House Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter said the tentative plan is to wrap up sooner, possibly May 8 or May 13.

Must pass legislation remaining: Lawmakers are still working on the education and General Fund budgets for next fiscal year which starts Oct. 1. Passing the budgets is the only task lawmakers are required to do under the constitution. The Senate has passed the education budget and the House has passed the General Fund budget.

Another lottery/gambling bill was defeated. The gambling and lottery bill in the Alabama State House was introduced and quickly shot down, making the latest version its quickest and most uneventful attempt to date. It doesn't seem to matter what the bills says, if the word 'gaming' or 'gambling' shows up in the text, it's a 'no' vote.

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. They decide which drugs are covered, how much a patient's copay is, where you can get your prescription filled and how much pharmacies are paid for medications and clinical services.

Gov. Ivey signed [SB 199](#) on 2 April that grants mothers eight weeks of maternity leave 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.

Gov. Ivey signed [SB 115](#) making impersonating a peace officer a Class C felony.

Gov. Ivey signed [HB 230](#) that requires real estate agents to give clients a disclosure form before showing a property that conforms with a new national rule and clarifies when written agreements are needed between agents and clients..

[SB 91](#) requires individuals to obtain local government approval before constructing tall structures within two miles of military installations and empowers local authorities to halt construction that could adversely affect military operations. The bill passed 103-0 and goes to Gov. Ivey.

[SB 179](#) applying to the Alabama National Guard revises the ranks of officers authorized to impose certain disciplinary measures and expands the types of punishments that may be administered without a court-martial. The bill passed 102-0 and goes to Gov. Ivey.

[SB 102](#) gives pregnant women presumptive [eligibility for Medicaid](#). The bill passed 103-0 and goes to Gov. Ivey

[HB 27](#) prohibits people who are on the sex offender registry from being employed or volunteering as a first responder. The bill passed 33-0 and goes to Gov. Ivey.

[SB 83](#) requires new public buildings to include [powered, height-adjustable changing tables](#) that are fit for children and adults. The bill passed 93-2 and goes to Gov. Ivey.

[SB 200](#) would change the name of "drug courts" to "[accountability courts](#)" and includes offenders with mental illness and offenders who are veterans. The bill goes to Gov. Ivey. 



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!

Memorial Day

Honoring the Heroes that Served Our Country

Memorial Day honors the men and women who have died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. It is a day that reminds us of the high price of freedom and the debt of gratitude we owe to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country and its freedoms. This includes soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen who lost their lives in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping missions in which the United States has participated, from the Revolutionary War to the present day.

Memorial Day is a special occasion to reflect on the service and sacrifice of these brave men and women and to express our deep gratitude for their dedication and devotion to duty.

Origins & History of Memorial Day

The origins of Memorial Day can be traced back to the aftermath of the American Civil War. As the conflict ended in 1865, people across the country began holding ceremonies to honor the Union and Confederate soldiers who had died in the conflict. One of the earliest known ceremonies took place in Charleston, South Carolina, in May 1865, when a group of freed slaves gathered to commemorate fallen Union soldiers buried in a local racecourse.

The first national observance of Memorial Day, then known as Decoration Day, was declared by General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic on May 5, 1868. The day was designated as a time to decorate the graves of the fallen with flowers and to hold ceremonies to honor their sacrifice.

Over time, Memorial Day became an important national holiday, honoring all Americans who died while serving in the military. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a federal holiday to be celebrated on the last Monday in May.

Today, Memorial Day is marked by parades, speeches, and ceremonies at military cemeteries and other sites across the country. It serves as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have died in service to our country, and a time to reflect on the true cost of freedom.

Facts about Memorial Day

- American flags are flown at half-staff until noon on Memorial Day and then raised to full-staff for the rest of the day as a symbol of the nation's resilience and determination.
- The National Moment of Remembrance was established by Congress in 2000 as a way to encourage Americans to pause for one minute at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day to remember and honor the sacrifices of those who died in service to the country.
- The red poppy has become a symbol of Memorial Day. This tradition dates back to World War I when a poem called "In Flanders Fields" described red poppies growing on the graves of fallen soldiers.
- Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day, and it was first observed on May 30th, 1868. One hundred years later in 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act which made Memorial Day a federal holiday that always landed on the last Monday of May.



18 Birthdays in May

Col John A Morrison, USAF
COL Harold J Hicks, USA
Col Larry D Layne, USAF
COL Michael D Teter, USA
CW3 Kenneth J Nurmi, USN
CW4 Derrick M Holland, USA
BG Robert A Drolet, USA
LTC Russell B Brownfield Jr, USA
MAJ Charles B Drake, USMC

CW4 Jeffrey A Sumners, USA
LTC Randall W Withrow, USA
Mrs. Jan Camp
COL Stephen H French, USA
LTC Paul A Hays, USA
CW3 Clarissa A Lewis, USA
Col James R Schumacher, USAF
COL Marvin S Smith, USA
CH (LTC) James R Johnson Sr, 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 so it can be included in future newsletters. Thank you.

Chaplain's Corner – continued from page 8

So, what do we have to fear? Death? That has been conquered. For many of us though it's the small things that seem to be magnified that we fear. We know from Psalms that the Lord is watching over us and will keep us from harm. So trust, live free, and believe in the one who has conquered our last enemy, death.

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

None this month

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

We will miss these outstanding Leaders and Patriots.



Some Exchanges to Offer Amazon Services

Dozens of Army & Air Force Exchange locations now offer Amazon package services, though stores in Alaska and Hawaii have more limited options. (Army photo)

The Army & Air Force Exchange will partner with Amazon to offer package return and pickup services at more than 90 Army, Air Force, and Space Force locations in the U.S., the retail giant [announced March 20](#).

Shoppers who live near (or on) base can select the store as a pickup or return option. They'll receive an email when packages are delivered and can pick them up at the customer services desk.

Returns can also be processed at customer service – customers must use the Amazon app or website in advance to begin the return process. After generating a QR code, shoppers can bring the code and their package, in the original packaging from the manufacturer, to their exchange, where it will be packed and returned at no additional cost.

The [full list of locations \(PDF\)](#) includes three Alaska and two Hawaii installations with pickup-only services.

“The Exchange is already a hub for community life with all the amenities and services it offers,” Chief Master Sgt. Rich Martinez, USAF, the Exchange’s senior enlisted advisor, said in the release. “Now, Exchange shoppers don’t have to make a separate trip off-installation — they can take care of their returns and pickups at the Exchange.”

Exchange shoppers may also find in-store events celebrating Month of the Military Child throughout April, including giveaways. Learn more [at this link](#), or [find an event near you](#).

Preparing for Tornadoes and Spring Storms

Weather-related risks come in all shapes and forms and at any time. It's essential to take action and prepare for the worst while staying informed. Here are tips during the spring storm and tornado seasons.

Understand the threat

Tornadoes, usually developing from severe thunderstorms, may strike with very little warning almost anywhere and can produce catastrophic, widespread destruction. Spring, between March and June, is peak season for tornadoes to potentially occur. They are incredibly violent; tornado winds will vary in speed, but can reach more than 200 mph and have the potential to destroy buildings, flip cars and create deadly debris.

Be alert and informed

- Know the signs. Tornadoes could develop from rotating clouds; involve a loud roar, similar to a freight train; and appear as dark, greenish skies.
- Sign up for alerts. Use the [FEMA app](#), [NOAA Weather Radio](#), and local emergency alert systems to receive warnings in real time.
- Understand alerts. A tornado watch is an alert to be prepared, given favorable conditions, for a tornado to develop. A tornado warning means to immediately take shelter, as a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar.

Build a tornado-specific emergency kit

Have a room identified that provides enhanced safety conditions where emergency supply kits can be stored. The supplies can include the following:

- Water (one gallon per person per day for at least three days).
- Non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (such as a NOAA Weather Radio).
- Flashlights and extra batteries.
- First aid kits.
- Whistle (to signal for help).
- Dust masks and plastic sheeting.
- Local maps.
- Copies of personal documents and medical records (use My HealtheVet to access VA records).
- Medications, hearing aids, glasses and mobility device chargers.
- Comfort items for kids or pets.

Create a tornado plan

- Identify a safe shelter and location (possibly a basement or interior room on the lowest floor, away from windows).
- Families should have a communication plan to ensure each member of the household knows how to reach one another and where to meet if separated.
- Drill together to test the plans and practice tornado response actions regularly.

Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a holiday honoring motherhood that is observed in different forms throughout the world. In the United States, Mother's Day 2025 falls on Sunday, May 11. The American incarnation of Mother's Day was created by Anna Jarvis in 1908 and became an official U.S. holiday in 1914. Jarvis would later denounce the holiday's commercialization and spent the latter part of her life trying to remove it from the calendar. While dates and celebrations vary, Mother's Day traditionally involves presenting moms with flowers, cards and other gifts.

What Is Mother's Day?

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the [ancient Greeks](#) and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday."

Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration fell on the fourth Sunday in Lent and was originally seen as a time when the faithful would return to their "mother church"—the main church in the vicinity of their home—for a special service.

Over time the Mothering Sunday tradition shifted into a more secular holiday, and children would present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation. This custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s.

Mother's Day Origins in the United States

The origins of Mother's Day as celebrated in the United States date back to the 19th century. In the years before the [Civil War](#), Ann Reeves Jarvis of [West Virginia](#) helped start "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" to teach local women how to properly care for their children.

These clubs later became a unifying force in a region of the country still divided over the Civil War. In 1868 Jarvis organized "Mothers' Friendship Day," at which mothers gathered with former Union and Confederate soldiers to promote reconciliation.

Another precursor to Mother's Day came from the abolitionist and suffragette [Julia Ward Howe](#). In 1870 Howe wrote the "Mother's Day Proclamation," a call to action that asked mothers to unite in promoting world peace. In 1873 Howe campaigned for a "Mother's Peace Day" to be celebrated every June 2.

Other early Mother's Day pioneers include Juliet Calhoun Blakely, a [temperance](#) activist who inspired a local Mother's Day in Albion, [Michigan](#), in the 1870s. The duo of Mary Towles Sasseen and Frank Hering, meanwhile, both worked to organize a Mothers' Day in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some have even called Hering "the father of Mothers' Day."

Anna Jarvis Turns Mother's Day into a National Holiday

The official Mother's Day holiday arose in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of [Anna Jarvis](#), daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Following her mother's 1905 death, Anna Jarvis conceived of Mother's Day as a way of honoring the sacrifices mothers made for their children.

Continued on page 19



Membership Meeting
28 May 2025
Summit Club
1030 – Meet & Greet
1100 - Lunch

COL Erin Eike, USA
Redstone Arsenal Garrison Commander

Colonel Erin Eike assumed duties as the U.S. Army Garrison – Redstone Arsenal Commander Aug. 1, 2024. In her role, she oversees support services for more than 65 tenant organizations that include the four-star Army Materiel Command, NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center, the FBI and other federal and DOD agencies that operate from the installation.

The Windom, Minnesota native began her military career in 1998 by enlisting and serving in the Minnesota National Guard. Upon her graduation from Minnesota State and Gustavus Adolphus College, she was commissioned as a second lieutenant. Along with her bachelor’s degree in psychology, she earned a master’s in information technology management from Webster University and a master’s in strategic studies from the U.S. Air War College.

Prior to her assignment at Redstone Arsenal, Eike served as the chief of the Requirements Division in the J6 Command, Control, Communications and Computers Cyber, at the Pentagon.

Throughout her career, Eike has held various command and staff positions, including commanding the 59th Signal Battalion and serving as the Army Alaska G6 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Her previous roles include executive officer to the director of the Network Cross-Functional Team at Army Futures Command; executive officer to the director of the Architecture, Operations, Networks, and Space Directorate at Department of Army Headquarters G6; operations team senior communications watch officer, National Military Command Center, Pentagon; Brigade S6, 214th Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; several positions within the 44th Medical Command (Airborne), Fort Bragg, North Carolina; battalion S6, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, 210th Fires Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Castle, Korea and others.

Colonel Eike’s awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, three Meritorious Service Medals, five Army Commendation Medals, Army Reserve Components Achievement Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with two stars, Korean Defense Service Medal, five Overseas Service Ribbons, Parachutist Badge, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Army Staff Identification Badges.

Menu: Spaghetti with Marinara Sauce; Chicken Parmesan; Seasoned Whole Green beans; Cannoli; Tossed Salad with Italian Dressing; Garlic Toast; Iced Tea, Ice Water, and Coffee

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: COL John Vanderbleek, 256-893-1565, jvbleek78@gmail.com NLT 23 May 2025.

Chapter Happenings



Chapter President Rick West presents MOAA JROTC Award to Buckhorn HS Cadet Kaycie Bush.



LMT Chair John Fairlamb presents MOAA JROTC Award to Huntsville HS Cadet Gavin Thornsbury.



Enjoying some great chow!



MG Boles addresses a full house!



MG Boles, CAPT West, and the Gold Bar recipients.



Chapter President Rick West presents Certificate of Appreciation to MG Boles.

Mother's Day – continued from page 16

After gaining financial backing from a Philadelphia department store owner named John Wanamaker, in May 1908 she organized the first official Mother's Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia. That same day also saw thousands of people attend a Mother's Day event at one of Wanamaker's retail stores in Philadelphia.

Following the success of her first Mother's Day, Jarvis—who remained unmarried and childless her whole life—resolved to see her holiday added to the national calendar. Arguing that American holidays were biased toward male achievements, she started a massive letter writing campaign to newspapers and prominent politicians urging the adoption of a special day honoring motherhood.

By 1912 many states, towns and churches had adopted Mother's Day as an annual holiday, and Jarvis had established the Mother's Day International Association to help promote her cause. Her persistence paid off in 1914 when President [Woodrow Wilson](#) signed a measure [officially establishing](#) the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

Jarvis Decries Commercialized Mother's Day

Anna Jarvis had originally conceived of Mother's Day as a day of personal celebration between mothers and families. Her version of the day involved wearing a white carnation as a badge and visiting one's mother or attending church services. But once Mother's Day became a national holiday, it was not long before florists, card companies and other merchants capitalized on its popularity.

While Jarvis had initially worked with the floral industry to help raise Mother's Day's profile, by 1920 she had become disgusted with how the holiday had been commercialized. She outwardly denounced the transformation and urged people to stop buying Mother's Day flowers, cards and candies.

Jarvis eventually resorted to an open campaign against Mother's Day profiteers, speaking out against confectioners, florists and even charities. She also launched countless lawsuits against groups that had used the name "Mother's Day," eventually spending most of her personal wealth in legal fees. By the time of her death in 1948 Jarvis had disowned the holiday altogether, and even actively lobbied the government to see it removed from the American calendar.

Mother's Day Traditions and Celebrations Around the World

While versions of Mother's Day are celebrated worldwide, traditions vary depending on the country. In Thailand, for example, Mother's Day is always celebrated in August on the birthday of the current queen, Sirikit.

Another alternate observance of Mother's Day can be found in Ethiopia, where families gather each fall to sing songs and eat a large feast as part of Antrosht, a multi-day celebration honoring motherhood.

In the United States, Mother's Day continues to be celebrated by presenting mothers and other women with gifts and flowers, and it has become one of the biggest holidays for consumer spending. Families also celebrate by giving mothers a day off from activities like cooking or other household chores.

At times, Mother's Day has also been a date for launching political or feminist causes. In 1968 [Coretta Scott King](#), wife of [Martin Luther King Jr.](#), used Mother's Day to host a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In the 1970s women's groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for equal rights and access to childcare. 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 300 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 May

- 1 May – May Day
- 1 May – Great Britain was formed (1707)
- 1 May – Francis Gary Powers’ U-2 plane shot down over Russia (1960)
- 2 May – Osama Bin Laden killed by US Special Forces (2011)
- 4 May – Four students killed at Kent State University by National Guardsmen (1970)
- 5 May – Cinco de Mayo
- 5 May – Alan Shepard became the first American in space (1961)
- 6 May – German airship Hindenburg explodes at Lakehurst, NJ (1937)
- 7 May - The *Lusitania* was torpedoed by a German submarine, killing 1198 (1915)
- 7 May – Golf Meeting – Links – 1200**
- 8 May – Monthly Board Meeting – 1100 – Java Café**
- 8 May – Battle of Coral Sea (1942)
- 11 May – Battle of Hamburger Hill (1969)
- 11 May – Mother’s Day
- 12 May – Berlin Blockade lifted (1949)
- 13 May – Pope John Paul II shot in St. Peter’s Square (1981)
- 14 May – Smallpox vaccine developed (1796)
- 15 May – George Wallace shot while campaigning for President (1972)
- 17 May – New York Stock Exchange established (1792)
- 17 May – First running of the Kentucky Derby (1875)
- 18 May – Mt. St. Helens erupted (1980)
- 20 May – Charles Lindbergh took off on his historic flight (1927)
- 20 May – Amelia Earhart became first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic (1932)
- 21 May – The American Red Cross was founded (1881)
- 24 May – First telegraph message sent (1844)
- 26 May – Evacuation of Dunkirk began (1940)
- 26 May – Memorial Day
- 27 May – Golden Gate bridge opened (1937)
- 28 May - Monthly Member Meeting – Summit Club – 1100**
- 28 May – Amnesty International founded (1961)
- 30 May – Lincoln Memorial was dedicated (1922)
- 31 May – Johnstown flood killed over 2300 (1889)

