

ECAC Newsletter

ecacmoaa.com



APRIL 2025

MOAA Award Program

This month's presentation will be our annual Senior and Junior ROTC Awards Ceremony, with Major Benjamin DeBardeleben as the Emcee. In all, there will be thirteen awardees, four from Auburn University's ROTC units, four from Tuskegee University's ROTC units, four cadets from local high school JROTC units, and one cadet from a military academy. Please read about this year's recipients on pages 5-9.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA - The cadet or midshipman must:

Be in the next-to-last year of the ROTC or JROTC program (customarily in his junior year of college or high school). Local chapters have final approval if in a different year group.

Be in good academic standing.

Be of high moral character.

Evince a high order of loyalty to his/her unit, school and country.

Show exceptional potential for military leadership.



Next Dinner Meeting 1800 —Thursday—17 April 2025 The location for the meeting this month is at the Saugahatchee Country Club

3800 Bent Creek Road Opelika, AL 36804

Take Bent Creek Parkway which is Exit 57 off I 85. Go the opposite direction of the Sam's Club/Sports Academy stores and through the residential section. Saugahatchee Country Club is on the left before Hamilton Road.

Please RSVP at 334-826-1107 or by email to bohler1107@charter.net by Monday, 14 April 2025 by 2100.

Meal cost per person is \$45 payable with cash or check to ECAC-MOAA and award recipients are our quests (free).

Wine and beer are available in the hallway at a cash bar only.

Wine \$10 glass/ Beer \$5 bottle

6:00-6:30 Arrival

6:30-7:15 Dinner

7:15-8:30 Awards

Please Dress Business Casual / Coat and Military Tie if you have one. Buffet Line Menu

House Salad

Fried Chicken/ Meatloaf

Garlic Parm MashedPotatoes

Mac n Cheese

Mixed Vegetables/ Haricot Vert

Key Lime Pie

Board Meeting was Monday, April 7, 2025.

Per Chapter By-laws, you must become a member of National MOAA to belong to the chapter.

May Board of Directors meeting will be Monday, May 5th, at 1145 at Chappy's. Any member wishing to attend should contact a Board member for an invitation.





Treasurer Report by Gordon Bugg \$4133.20 3-31-25 Bank Balance No outstanding deposits or debits

Minutes from March General Meeting

- The general meeting on March 20th was held at the Auburn University Club and was called to order by Mike Horsefield at 6:32 p.m. There were 22 members and guests present.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ron Carson with all eyes on Danny Sample.
- The prayer was offered by Danny Sample.
- The social did not have a guest speaker, but information was passed.
 - 30 April at 1200 there will be a ceremony recognizing Vietnam Veterans on the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War at the Pinetucket Cemetery off of Wire Road in Auburn (AU Meat Lab pasture-look for the flag pole on top of the hill).
 - 20 May at 1130 the Auburn University Veterans Resource Center will have a Memorial Day ceremony on the lawn at Cater Hall.
- → The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



for military kids

In 1986, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger designated April as Month of the Military Child. Military bases, cities and school districts around the world will honor these young American heroes with special events just for them. April 15th Wear Purple to Support Your Kids

BJ

DeBardeleben

ECAC-MOAA's 2025 Meeting Dates

Jan 16th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Feb 20th	Thursday	6PM	Saugahatchee
Mar 20th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Apr 17th	Thursday	6PM	Saugahatchee
May 15th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Jun/July	No Meetings		
Aug 16th	Saturday	4PM	Grove Hill Club
Sept 18th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Oct 16th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Nov 20th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Dec 13th	Saturday	11AM	Conquistadors





FYI: Distaff Club

If you are somewhat new to ECAC MOAA, you may not be aware that there is a local organization called Distaff Club for military spouses. They restaurant hop on the second Wednesday of the month in the Auburn/Opelika area. Traditionally, the February meeting includes a bring a spouse/friend/Valentine to lunch and the December meeting has an ornament exchange. They enjoy getting together to socialize and getting to know one another. Dues are only \$5.00 a year and collected at the restaurant in the summer. If interested, please contact Judy Bohler, President, (334) 826-1107 or Cathy Golden, Treasurer, (334) 246-7142. Come join us!

MOAA Advocacy in Action 2025: The Advocacy Playbook It's time for MOAA's annual campaign on Capitol Hill. The 5 Issues for MOAA members to highlight with lawmakers are:

- ♦ Improving unaccompanied housing to support readiness and quality of life
- Advancing the report Ending the Wait for Toxic Exposed Veterans to ensure timely delivery of earned benefits
- Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act to expand employment opportunities
- Enhancing stability and accountability in the military health system
- ♦ Improving caregiving support for families of veterans

Details are in the April edition of the Military Officer, the MOAA magazine and can also be found on-line at MOAA.org. Remember, your lawmakers respond to their constituents and your voice can make a difference.

Ron Barton Legislative Director



Twelve Students Receive ECAC-MOAA Awards



ECAC-MOAA Military Academy Award Winner



Southern Preparatory Military Academy

Miller Backus

Cadet Miller Backus currently serves as the Battalion S-3. He is respected by his peers for his loyalty to the Corp. He began his JROTC Career as the guidon bearer for his company and since then he is inspired other Cadets to live by the JROTC Creed and live the Army values. He has shown his potential for higher responsibility for his attention to detail for every task he is given and in turn completes the operation order for the Corp of Cadets. He planned and resourced a Raider Team event which included other area high schools to participate. He currently has a 3.9 GPA and wants to continue his education after graduation. He is relied on by the other staff members and is continuously sought after for his advice not only with JROTC but also personal issues because of selfless service and respect he has for others.



ECAC-MOAA High School JROTC Award Winners



Central High School JROTC

Journey Rodriguez

Cadet Journey Rodriguez is the 2025-2026 Command Master Chief (CMC) for Central High School Red Devil Battalion. CMC Rodriguez is a dedicated member of the unit and proud to be a member of the following teams: S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Air Rifle, Unarmed Drill, Orienteering, and Color Guard.

She also gives back to the Phenix City area as an active participant in the Community Service Team, Freshman Orientation Cadre, and Veterans Day Parade. CMC Rodriguez served as a Division Chief most recently before her competitive selection to Command Master Chief. Currently, CMC Rodriguez is developing the Summer 2025 Freshman Orientation Camp and organizing the selection board for Division Chiefs.

Smiths Station High School JROTC

Nicolai Shomaker

Cadet Nicolai Shomaker is a member of the National Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (Math National Honor Society), Rho Kappa (History National Honor Society), FCA, and Beta Club. He currently has a GPA of 4.1 in his academic endeavors. Cadet Shomaker is the Commander of the Sons of the American Legion for the Fletcher-McCollister Post 135, and he has participated in Lee Cunty Young Leaders.

Cadet Shomaker is also the current Commanding Officer of the SSHS MCJROTC program and the Co-Captain of our Raider team. Last, but not least, he helps teach Sunday School at Grace Baptist Church. Cadet Shomaker would just like to thank God, his family, and his community for helping him achieve these opportunities and aspirations.

Auburn High School JROTC Campbell Hooks

Cadet Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Campbell Hooks, affectionately known as "Souppee" among her peers, exemplifies the highest standards of leadership, dedication, and service in the Auburn High School Tiger Battalion. As the Cadet Command Sergeant Major, she plays a pivotal role in mentoring her fellow cadets, upholding the unit's discipline, and ensuring operational excellence. In addition to her JROTC leadership, she also serves as the Cadet Commander for the Civil Air Patrol Auburn Composite Squadron, further demonstrating her commitment to service and aviation.

Over the past three years in JROTC, Cadet CSM Hooks has embraced every challenge with determination. She has competed in two Raider competitions, showcasing her physical endurance and team spirit, and has commanded the esteemed Honor Guard, representing her battalion with honor and precision. Through these experiences, she has developed invaluable skills in leadership, planning, communication, and teamwork—qualities that will serve her well beyond high school.

Cadet CSM Hooks balances her rigorous leadership responsibilities with an impressive academic record. Enrolled in both Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, she maintains a remarkable 4.2 GPA, reflecting her intellectual curiosity and work ethic. She is also a fierce competitor on the women's varsity wrestling team, demonstrating resilience and discipline both on and off the mat.

Outside of her academic and leadership commitments, Cadet CSM Hooks enjoys running, working out, building Legos, and reading—hobbies that reflect her creativity and drive. With an eye toward the future, she aspires to attend the United States Air Force Academy, where she plans to study Aeronautical Engineering and fulfill her dream of flying for the U.S. Air Force.

Cadet Command Sergeant Major Campbell Hooks embodies the very essence of JROTC's mission—developing young leaders of character who are prepared to excel in any endeavor. Her dedication, perseverance, and passion for service inspire those around her, making her a shining example of what it means to lead with excellence.

Booker T. Washington High School JROTC

Lawrence Christopher Betts, Jr.

Cadet Command Sargeant Major (CSM) Lawrence Christopher Betts, Jr. is a senior at Booker T. Washington High School in Tuskegee, AL. Cadet Betts is a dedicated member of the unit having served in the JROTC program for four years and having risen to the rank of Sergeant Major. His time is also spent as a college student dually enrolled at Tuskegee University while maintaining his A Honor Roll status at Booker T. Washington.

Cadet CSM Betts is a member of the National Honor Society and is actively involved in several clubs and organization at his school, community, and church. Cadet Betts will be attending the University of Alabama at Birmingham in the fall to study Pre-Medicine with a goal of becoming an orthodontist, and opening his own practice.



ECAC-MOAA Tuskegee Univ. ROTC Award Winners



Tuskegee University Air Force ROTC

Alexandra Sinclair

Alexandra Sinclair

Cadet Colonel Alexandra Sinclair is a native of Lithonia, Georgia and graduated in 2021 from Arabia Mountain High School. She is currently serving as the Wing Commander of the 15th Cadet Wing at Tuskegee University, where she's responsible for leading the Wing Staff, Group Commanders, and Squadron Commanders to ensure the safe and effective execution of operations for 64 cadets. Cadet Sinclair continuously sets the standard for her peers and subordinates by exemplifying the Air Force Core Values, maintaining an excellent physical fitness score, and earning academic honors. Last semester, Cadet Sinclair was the Training Squadron Commander, where she led four flight commanders to successfully complete thirty-three required training objectives, ensured adherence to standards, as well as resolving multiple conflicts with scheduling and training. Cadet Sinclair is also an active member of Cadet Wing's Honor Guard and performed with Tuskegee University's Joint Color Guard for several events in the community.

Cadet Sinclair is pursuing a degree in Architecture and will graduate in Spring 2026. She hopes to go into the Public Affairs career field upon commissioning. Cadet Sinclair was inspired by her brother to attend Tuskegee University, who is an alum of the school. She joined the Air Force ROTC program to develop into a stronger leader and serve with purpose. Over the last four years, Cadet Sinclair has developed her leadership skills and credits her time at Tuskegee and in Air Force ROTC with helping to shape her character, strengthen her discipline, and prepare her to lead with integrity.

Tuskegee University Naval ROTC Navy Elijah Arcusa

Midshipman First Class Elijah Arcusa is a Senior political science major from Bowie, Maryland. Graduating from Bowie High school as the Commanding officer of NJROTC, he joined the Tuskegee NROTC battalion in 2020 under the NPP scholarship. With a cumulative GPA of 3.4, he is currently the battalion commanding officer as well as a member of Pi Sigma Alpha political science honor society.

During his time at Tuskegee he has served as the swim officer, a squad leader, and a platoon commander. He spends his summers with his family in Maryland as well as with his girlfriend Zicari in Georgia.

Midshipman Arcusa has ship selected LPD 18 The New Orleans out of Sasebo Japan. He plans to graduate and commission in May while leaving a long lasting impact on his fellow Midshipman of NROTC, fostering mentorship and leadership.

Tuskegee University Naval ROTC Marine

No Submission This Year

Tuskegee University Army ROTC

Rei-Ann Dean

Cadet SFC Rei-Ann Dean is a Junior at Tuskegee University with a double major in Communications & Psychology. She hails from Charlotte, North Carolina where she graduated from Mallard Creek High School in June of 2022.

Cadet Dean plans to graduate from Tuskegee University in May of 2026. She aspires to become an Adjutant General Officer in the United States Army upon commissioning from Tuskegee University in the Spring of 2026.



ECAC-MOAA Auburn Univ. ROTC Award Winners



Auburn University Air Force ROTC

Morgan Julian

Cadet Morgan Julian is a hard-charging cadet at AFROTC Detachment 005 at Auburn University. She has shown exemplary leadership in her three years in the program, excelling as General Military Course (GMC) advisor to the commander as a sophomore. After competitive selection to Field Training, followed by an even more competitive selection to the Capstone Officer Development course, she returned as a member of the Professional Officer Corps and has served in both Training and Operations Groups.

Morgan also sports a 4.0 GPA at Auburn, flawlessly committing to excellence. Her major is Aviation Management and she pursues two minors and a private pilot's license. If this weren't enough, she actively participates in the detachment's service organization, Arnold Air Society, serving the campus and surrounding community. She is the model of the Air Force Core values and will make an outstanding lieutenant when she graduates next year.

Auburn University Army ROTC

Hunter Bryson Schmick

Cadet Hunter Bryson Schmick was born in Monroe, Louisiana. He attended high school in Wetumpka, Alabama where he graduated in 2022. CDT Schmick then enrolled in Auburn University to pursue a major in Finance. Hunter is a 4-year National Scholarship winner and holds a cumulative GPA of 3.52 and a 4.0 in MILS courses. He is the first to meet academic deadlines and/or assignment specifications and is ranked in the top 15% of his MSIII cohort of 34 Cadets.

CDT Schmick serves on the parking team at Auburn Community Church where he also sponsors children in a big brother program called Project Uplift. CDT Schmick is a member of the Ranger Challenge team and earned the Norwegian Foot March Badge in the spring of 2023 from Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and in addition, graduated from Air Assault school in the summer of 2024 from Fort Benning, Georgia.

Short term goals for CDT Schmick include maxing out the Army Combat Fitness Test, making time to read and complete daily devotionals, and to grow as an effective leader. Long term goals include growing his faith and being able to have a family while being an effective leader in the Army. Fun fact, Hunter lived in Germany for 5 years and can speak 4 languages. CDT Schmick wants to branch Engineer in the active component.

Auburn University Naval ROTC Navy

Fleanor Tomisek

Midshipman First Class Eleanor Tomisek is a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee and a 2021 graduate of the Baylor School. She joined Auburn University Naval ROTC in fall of 2021 as a freshman on a 4-year National scholarship. She is currently the Battalion Commanding Officer of the Auburn University NROTC battalion, as well as a lifeguard with Auburn's Recreation and Wellness Aquatics Center. Midshipman Tomisek is a senior studying Political Science with a cumulative grade point average of 3.6. She has been on the Dean's List 4 times.

While working towards her degree, she served as a squad leader twice, won honor platoon as a platoon commander, worked as operations officer last fall, and is now battalion commander. In February, she went up to Washington DC and passed her nuclear interview to become a submarine officer. She will commission this May and move to Charleston shortly after to begin Power School. She hopes to have left a lasting impact on the culture of Auburn's Naval ROTC Unit and looks forward to seeing everybody out in the fleet.

Auburn University Naval ROTC Marine

Andrea Adams

Midshipman 1/C Andrea Adams is a native of Cumming, Georgia, and a student at Auburn University majoring in Law and Justice. She is currently serving as the Public Affairs Assistant for Auburn University's Naval ROTC battalion. Throughout her time in the program, she has held various leadership roles, including Communications Officer, Platoon Commander, Marine Platoon Sergeant, and Squad Leader.

Midshipman Adams has been recognized for her dedication and leadership, earning the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and a Leadership Recognition Award throughout her time at Auburn. As Communications Officer, she played a key role in enhancing engagement and community outreach through social media, strengthening connections between the battalion and the broader Auburn community.

In addition to her leadership roles, Midshipman Adams has actively contributed to training and development within the Marine Platoon. She participated in planning two field exercises designed to improve midshipmen's critical thinking and preparation for Officer Candidates School (OCS).

Beyond ROTC, she serves as an Involvement Ambassador, helping students engage with campus organizations and leadership opportunities. She maintains a strong academic record with a 3.8 GPA.

Having a Student Start College: Health plan options depend on where the school is and your sponsor's military status. Here are some questions to help you decide.



1. Where's the school located?

TRICARE Prime is available in Prime Service Areas Geographic areas in the U.S. where we offer TRICARE Prime. They ensure medical readiness of active duty by adding to the capability and capacity of military hospitals and clinics. Prime Service Areas were also built around the Base Realignment and Closure sites.. You can check your eligibility or call your regional contractor to see if the school is in a PSA.

If so, your child may enroll in TRICARE Prime.*
If not, your child can use TRICARE Select.

*The <u>US Family Health Plan</u> is another Prime plan available in designated USFHP areas.

2. Is your child enrolled in TRICARE Prime now?

You should consider your child's options when they go to college, especially if the college is outside of your home PSA:

- Your child's primary care manager provides most of their routine care. If far from home, it may not be easy to do.
- Talk to your child's PCM to see if they're willing to give you referrals for your child if they need care at school.
- Your PCM isn't required to do so, but they may work with you so your child can stay enrolled at home.

If your PCM won't give you referrals for care needed at school, your child can still stay enrolled, but will be charged <u>point-of-services fees</u> for any care received without a referral.

3. How will your child get to the doctor?

If your child enrolls in TRICARE Prime, they'll have an assigned PCM. They must make appointments with the PCM or have a referral from the PCM. If not, they'll be charged POS fees.

If it's not convenient to have an assigned PCM, you should consider TRICARE Select. Your child can visit any TRICARE-authorized provider An authorized provider is any individual, institution/organization, or supplier that is licensed by a state, accredited by national organization, or meets other standards of the medical community, and is certified to provide benefits under TRICARE. There are two types of TRICARE-authorized providers: Network and Non-Network. DS while at school and have more flexibility when home during school breaks.

4. How much will we pay out of pocket?

TRICARE Prime has the fewest out-of-pocket costs, unless you use the POS option.

With TRICARE Select, you'll save money by visiting a network provider. You'll pay annual deductibles and cost-shares. Most providers will bill TRICARE Select, but you may need to pay the provider up front for care and file a claim with TRICARE for reimbursement.

5. Will your child have a student health plan?

- Some colleges and universities offer a student health plan.
- Student health plans are other health insurance. TRICARE always pays second after OHI.

Editorial Policy. The East-Central Alabama Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and national MOAA provide their advocacy in a nonpartisan manner. Any conveyance of partisanship is unintended.

Surviving Spouse Corner: Improve Your Mental Skills With These Brain Exercises By: Pat Green April 1. 2025 National Newsletter

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 corelate 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.
- 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.

Who Can Join MOAA Chapter?

Membership in the East-Central Alabama Chapter is open to any National MOAA member who is on active duty, reserve, retired, or a former commissioned officer or warrant officer in any component of the Seven Uniformed Services of the United States (U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). The Surviving Spouse of these individuals are also eligible to join and participate as regular members. Additionally, we offer Associate memberships to 4th year ROTC cadets at Auburn University and Tuskegee University as well as to the living spouse of a regular Chapter member.

FCAC Mission Statement

The East-Central Alabama Chapter is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and was chartered in 1970. It serves the cities of Auburn and Opelika, Alabama, as well as the surrounding areas of Lee, Chambers, Russell, Tallapoosa, and Macon counties in Alabama. The mission of the East-Central Alabama Chapter is to benefit the members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors, and to advocate for a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community Join ECAC Online! and its members.

Executive Officers, Board of Directors, Chair Positions for Oct 2023-Oct 2025.

President: Mike Horsefield Vice President: Chris Richie BJ DeBardeleben Secretary: Treasurer: Gordon Bugg Director Chapter Affairs: Ron Carson Director Communication: Jeff Bohler

Judy Bohler Director Banquet: Director Legislative: Ron Barto

Chair Positions Surviving Spouses Liaison: Kathy Barto

Mike Horsefield Tops: Membership: Judy Bohler Personal Affairs: Ron Carson

Newsletter Editor: Judy Bohler Web Site: Jeff Bohler Digital Communications: Jeff Bohler

News Release: Ron Carson **ROTC Awards:** open

Monthly Meeting: Judy Bohler Guest Speakers: Chris Richie By-Laws: BJ DeBardeleben

State Council: Ron Barto Legislative Updates: Ron Barto MOAA News: Ron Barto Chaplain: open



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If you are interested in joining our Facebook group, you can use the following link:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/300482473982236/

If you are interested in joining our *LinkedIn* group, you can use the following link:

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12227504/



Some of the articles on these pages are gathered online from various MOAA websites and newsletters. They are attributable to their reporters and personnel. Contact the club secretary with any questions.

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