

**ECAC**

ECAC Newsletter

ecacmoaa.com**OCTOBER 2024**

Thursday Oct. 24th AU Club 6PM



Presentation: “The SS Mayaguez Incident: Assault on Koh Tang, a 2nd Lieutenant’s Perspective”. Guest Speaker: Tom Wynn

A description of the assault and recovery (May 1975), and my recollections of the incident. Read about the combat incident on page 6.

Tom Wynn was an Air Force brat who was born on Guam. He lived in 5 states and Japan twice, and went to DoD High School in Chofu, Japan. He married Debbie Stewart (HS classmate at Chofu HS), and has two children and eight grandchildren.

MIL CAREER: Moved family 19 times in 28.5 years (included Philippines, Korea, and 7 states). First ROTC class at Troy State. Went to pilot training at Craig AFB, Selma AL. Became C130 Pilot, Instructor Pilot, Flight Examiner, Operations Officer, Squadron Commander and Deputy Group Commander. Also Chemistry Instructor and Honors Chemistry Course director at USAFA. Was in the Initial Cadre of DoD Joint Specialty Officers, and served joint tours at US Forces Korea and held several positions at US Central Command. Last assignment was US Air Force ROTC Commander at Auburn University.

POST MILITARY: Ran Current Ops (J3) and Long Range Planning (J5) as a contractor for HQ Marine Forces North, New Orleans. Taught Chemistry at Southern Union Community College.

Order from the menu below,
and each person/couple pays their own bill.

Appetizers:

Chicken Egg Rolls \$11

Fried Green Tomatoes \$14

Salad:

Clubhouse Caesar \$8/\$12

House \$8/\$12

Add Chicken \$8, Add Shrimp \$13, Add Salmon \$12

Dinner:

All Served with Mashed Potatoes and Grilled Asparagus

8 oz Filet Mignon \$40

Grilled Salmon \$25

Panko Crusted Chicken \$25

**Next Dinner Meeting
October 24, 2024
1800 —Thursday— 6 PM**

1650 Yarbrough Farms Blvd.**Auburn, AL 36830**

Take Shug Jordan Pkwy to
North Donahue Dr. and go north.

After 1/2 mile turn left
onto Yarbrough Farms Blvd.,
and the AU Club is on the right.

Please RSVP at 334-826-1107**or by email to****bohler1107@charter.net****by Tuesday, Oct. 22nd by 9PM.**

Board Meeting was Monday, October 7, 2024.

As of September 30, 2024, the chapter has:

2024 Dues

72 Regular Members	\$20	Per regular member.
10 Surviving Spouse Members	\$15	Per dual member.
2 Associate Members	\$5	Per Widow/Associate/ROTC student
84 Total Chapter Members		

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

November's Board of Directors meeting will be Monday, Nov. 4th, at 1145 at Chappy's. Any member wishing to attend should contact a Board member for an invitation.



Treasurer Report by Gordon Bugg
 \$2,066.40 9-30-24 Bank Balance
 No outstanding items

Minutes from September General Meeting

- The general meeting was held at the Auburn University Club and was called to order by Mike Horsefield at 6:15 p.m. There were over twenty members and guests present.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ron Carson.
- The excellent prayer was offered by Jerry Williams.
- Bob Cochran gave an excellent presentation on WWI European military cemeteries. It started as a personal journey while stationed overseas.
- ✦ The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Secretary

BJ
DeBardeleben



The Auburn Planesmen R/C Flying Club,
<https://auburnplanesmen.org/>
 is located on a private full-scale (700 feet long by 100 feet wide) grass runway, flying radio-controlled electric, glow, gas, and turbine-powered aircraft. There is a solar-powered battery charging station for 12V and 120V battery chargers. You can expect 5-7 of the flying club members out every weekend, most likely on Sunday afternoons. Check out the website for more information.

ECAC-MOAA's 2024 Meeting Dates

Oct 24th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Nov 21st	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
<i>Dec 14th</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>11AM</i>	<i>Saugahatchee</i>



This restaurant donated the luau raffle prize and was the Hawaiian BBQ on the buffet table. Thank you, Jim 'N Nicks

ECAC-MOAA dues are being discussed at the board meetings, since the chapter has more expenses in the year than the current dues amount cover. The amount of \$20 hasn't changed in over 30 years and inflation plus the pandemic are causing the chapter to go negative on funds. Please look for updates on this issues.



Some of ECAC-MOAA board members attended a National MOAA webinar on August 14th for Leadership Training. Here are some fun facts about MOAA.

- ✦ There are 360,000 National Members and 60% of them have life membership status.
- ✦ 393- councils, regular chapters, satellites chapters, and virtual chapters in the USA.
 - ◊ Chapters 342
 - ◊ Councils 34
 - ◊ Satellites 11
 - ◊ Virtual 6 (Lawyers, Nurses, Chaplains, Spouses, Etc.) with 1,000 members
- ✦ Make sure you are “opt-in” for communications on your online account.

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!

In Memory of ...

Jeanetta Sharp

Jeanetta Irene Parker Sharp, age 85, of Opelika, Alabama, passed away peacefully on September 14, 2024, at Bethany House. Born on January 14, 1939, in Paris, Tennessee, Jeanetta was the daughter of the late Edward Bertram Parker III and Nina Murial Travis Parker.

Jeanetta was the beloved wife of Walter Eugene Sharp, with whom she shared 67 years of marriage. Together, they built a life filled with love and adventure. She was a devoted mother to her daughter, Cindy Sharp Youngblood (Robert), and a cherished grandmother to her three grandchildren, Ashley Youngblood Nichols (Kenneth), Ivy Youngblood Meecham (Charles), Robert Eugene Youngblood (Melanie), and her eight great-grandchildren.

Jeanetta graduated from Coffee High School in 1957 and supported her husband's career as an officer's wife, which took them to various locations including Hawaii, Florida, South Carolina, and Virginia. In 2018, she and her husband moved to Opelika, Alabama, from Albany, Georgia.

A dedicated member of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Opelika, Jeanetta's faith was a cornerstone of her life. She had a profound love for gardening, genealogy, and her pets. She was an active member of the Throntateeska Kennel Club, where she finished many Brittany Spaniels with AKC show championship and obedience titles. She was also involved in the Throntateeska Daughters of the American Revolution chapter in Albany, Georgia. Her passion and commitment were evident in all her pursuits.

Jeanetta's kindness, grace, and enthusiasm for life touched the hearts of all who knew her. She will be remembered for her warm smile, loving nature, storytelling, and unwavering commitment to her family and community. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1010 India Road, Opelika, AL 36801.

Please keep Gene and the family in your hearts and prayers.



Carolyn Cleckler Wray Rabren

After years of declining health Carolyn Cleckler Wray Rabren died at the early age of 75, on October 4, 2024. She was born in Chilton County on December 19, 1948. Carolyn was preceded in death by her parents, James Ruben and Dean Cleckler and her first husband Earl Wray and son Travis Rabren. She is survived by her second husband Carlos Rabren and children Star Wray (Talley), Mike Rabren (Tina), Matt Rabren (Laura), and Lynn Rabren. She is also survived by ten grandchildren: Brittany (Tyler) Cannon, Ali Rabren, Jacob (Abby) Drescher, Natalie

(Adam Kilgro, Austin (Morgan) Rabren, Courtney Rabren, Travis II (Emily) Rabren, Colson Rabren, Star Rabren, and Sarah Rabren. The grandchildren's Momo is also survived by seven great grandchildren with two more on the way: Caroline and Amelia Cannon, Andi and Turner Drescher, Brooks, Parks and James Kilgro. She enforced the practical rules that you do not embarrass yourself, you better not embarrass this family and be careful we have no money for hospital bills.

Carolyn was not only a wife and Momo, she was educated as a professional secretary at Massey-Draughon Business College and worked as such until her husband and this large family needed her talents full time. We always went to her for checking our written papers and she was the last word on correct spelling. She corrected our language and typed our required large student papers. She also didn't ignore public service to the community. Carolyn was active in supporting City sports for kids serving as coach for girls softball teams. Later she attended games, banquets, and awards programs for numerous softball, baseball, football, soccer, wrestling, and basketball events. Some players didn't have washing machines at home for practice uniforms but Carolyn gladly took care of the problem herself. One year she put together for publication the weekly high school football program at our home. She was most outstanding at her secretarial work and one year she was selected as the City of Auburn Professional Secretary of the Year and was honored by Mayor James Haygood and the sitting Governor of Alabama.

Flowers are not necessary. If you wish to honor and celebrate Carolyn's life please give to a charity of your choice. Her favorite charities were for those serving children like the Travis Rabren Foundation (<http://TravisRabrenFoundation.org>) which helps children in Lee County.

Please keep Carlos and the family in your hearts and prayers.



Pallie Butler who passed away this week.

Pallie Jim Smith Butler, aged 88, a most kind, sensitive, and caring lady passed away peacefully in her home on October 13, with her loving and devoted husband of 65 years at her side. She was born July 20, 1936 in the Community Hospital at East Tallassee, AL to Jewel Webster Smith and James Malcolm "Mac" Smith. She was named for her paternal grandparents, Jim and Pallie Harrington Smith. Her maternal grandparents were Andrew and Kate Golden Webster.

In June 1959, she married Kyle, a graduating API senior and her best friend and steady since 1956.

After marriage, the new couple continued to live in Tallassee, and Pallie continued teaching while Kyle awaited his scheduled entry into U. S. Naval service. In 1960 he was commissioned Ensign, USN and the couple began the nomadic lifestyle typical for a U.S. Navy family at that time characterized by frequent moves, meeting new military and civilian friends, experiencing diverse cultures, interesting sights, enjoying new and greater work experiences, and leaving behind cherished memories. Their 26-year Navy life took them to Athens GA, New Orleans, Key West, back to New Orleans, Milton FL, The Azores, Norfolk, back to Athens GA, Monterrey CA, Jacksonville, Sicily, Columbus OH, and finally Cherry Point NC. In 1986, after 26 years of service Kyle and Pallie retired from the Navy and moved to the house they had purchased a few years earlier when they expected Auburn to be their first choice for after-Navy living.

Upon return to Alabama the couple enjoyed making up for lost time with their parents, renewing friendships in Auburn, and attending the family gatherings they had missed over the years.

In keeping with Episcopal tradition, flowers are not emphasized, so in lieu contributions may be made to Project Clothe a Child <https://www.projectclotheachild.org/donate.html>. The family will receive friends and relatives on Thursday, October 17 at 1:00pm at the Parish Commons of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 100 Church Dr, Auburn. The funeral will follow at 2:00pm in the church, with the Reverend Pete Burgess presiding, immediately followed by a brief Committal Service graveside at Town Creek Cemetery, 1150 S. Gay St, Auburn. Pallbearers will be Rodney Rushing, Doug Sams, Kyle Kirby, Drew Kirby, Smith Harkins, and Larson Harkins.

Please keep Kyle and the family in your hearts and prayers.



Linus Fiely who passed away on March 14, 2024, will have his interment on Oct 25, 2024 in Arlington National Cemetery at 1:00 PM ET. Please contact Liz Fiely if you are planning to attend.



Kathy Barto, Surviving Spouse Liaison

The October issue of Military Officer (pages 26-27) has an article, "Planning Ahead" which provides a link to a new MOAA publication, "Preparing for the Loss of a Military Spouse". This booklet provides potential military and financial survivor benefits, focuses on getting your affairs in order, and comes with a valuable checklist to guide survivors in the immediate days after their loss. Please contact Kathy Barto by phone at 804-317-8588 or by email at kjbarto3@verizon.net if you need assistance.



Final Combat: The Mayaguez Incident at Koh Tang

After South Vietnam fell to communist forces, the U.S. was again involved in combat in Southeast Asia. In May 1975, the Cambodian Khmer Rouge navy seized the American cargo ship SS *Mayaguez* and its crew of 39 in international waters.

President Gerald Ford acted decisively to rescue the crew. The *Mayaguez* was anchored at Koh Tang Island near the Cambodian coast, and military planners believed the crew was on the island. Air Force gunships sank three Cambodian patrol boats to prevent them taking the *Mayaguez*'s crew from Koh Tang to the mainland. Soon after, Marines boarded the *Mayaguez* and found it abandoned.

Near Disaster

Marines landed on Koh Tang in Air Force helicopters to rescue the crew, but incomplete intelligence made the operation a near disaster. Expecting only light opposition, the USAF helicopters instead faced heavy fire from a large force. The Cambodians shot down four helicopters, damaged five more and killed 14 Americans. More U.S. troops and aircraft urgently moved to reinforce the 131 Marines and five USAF aircrew trapped on Koh Tang.

As the assault unfolded, the *Mayaguez* crew appeared in a small boat, and were rescued unharmed. President Ford halted offensive action, and the operation shifted from assault to rescuing the trapped Marines.

Determined Rescue

Another 100 Marines moved into Koh Tang to reinforce and extract the trapped Marines. Coordinated USAF support by attack aircraft, forward air controllers, rescue helicopters and gunships pounded Cambodian targets while the Americans on the ground fought hard to maintain their positions.

Only three USAF helicopters were left to extract more than 200 troops. They tried time and again, braving fierce, accurate fire, but were repeatedly driven off. Finally, they reached the beach and recovered 129 Marines in multiple trips, landing them quickly on Navy ships and returning to the island for more. On the last trip to the beach, USAF pararescueman Tech. Sgt. Wayne Fisk left his helicopter to find two missing Marines still laying down covering fire. He led them to the helicopter, and the 14-hour rescue ended as the aircraft left under fire.

Three Marines, inadvertently left on the island in the darkness and confusion, were killed and buried there within a few days by the Khmer Rouge. Total U.S. casualties included 18 dead and 50 wounded. Twenty-three more USAF personnel died in a support force helicopter crash in Thailand due to mechanical failure.

Quick, effective action at Koh Tang by USAF, Marine and Navy forces prevented a bad situation from becoming much worse. In particular, the persistence, determination and heroism of USAF helicopter crews saved many lives. The action at Koh Tang between May 12-15, 1975, was the last combat in Southeast Asia for U.S. forces.

National Museum of the United States Air Force Website

Memory Screening Site

My name is Brian, and I am a junior at Auburn University majoring in Biomedical Sciences. I am reaching out to promote a valuable service for senior citizens in the Auburn/Opelika community—a free memory screening to help detect potential cognitive impairments and/or early signs of Alzheimer's disease.

We are offering this memory screening service on the first Wednesday of every month from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Hubert & Grace Harris Center, located at 425 Perry St. Our upcoming dates are September 4th, October 2nd, **Nov. 6th** and so on.

No registration is required to participate. If people are unable to attend on the designated day, we are also happy to schedule an appointment via email.

For more information, please visit

https://auburnal.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30807&AdminPreview=1

This is a wonderful opportunity to take a proactive step in maintaining cognitive health, and we encourage all seniors and veterans in Auburn/Opelika to take advantage of this free service.

Very Respectfully, Brian Kim yzk0080@auburn.edu (334) 740 - 2308

Legislative Notes from the Director of Legislative Issues Ron Barto

The House and the Senate have adjourned until after the election. Here are some important key dates on the congressional calendar:

Nov 5: Election Day

Nov 12: Both the House and Senate return for a lame-duck session. Despite the name, this session might prove critical to advancement of the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), must-pass legislation which contains many key MOAA priorities.

Nov 21: This is the last day both chambers are in session prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Dec. 2: The Senate begins its three-week, year-end session; the House starts the following day.

Jan. 3, 2025: The 119th Congress begins.

Important Notes

The Major Richard Star Act has provisions for eliminating compensation offset of VA benefits for combat-injured retirees. It is a top MOAA priority with broad bill sponsorship in Congress, but to date has not been included into a bill for law. It did not pass committee inclusion into the 2025 NDAA this summer, but it is still hoped for possible amendment into the 2025 NDAA. MOAA has sought to correct this injustice before addressing the concurrent receipt for all service connected injuries. Sources: MOAA Military Officer magazine Oct 2024 and MOAA website.

COLA rates for 2025 was calculated at 3.2% and was announced by the Social Security Administration on October 10th. This is applicable to military retirement pay and the SBP. The COLA rate for 2024 was 3.2%. Militray.com website.

For more legislative updates, visit the MOAA Legislative Action Center at

www.moaa.org/takeaction.

Calendar Item:

November 16 – **the NROTC Alumni Association will be hosting a “No host” tailgate on the lawn in front of the Nichols Hall prior the Auburn Military Appreciation game against the University of Louisiana – Monroe.** This is an open and informal event for alumni of the NROTC unit and their supporters.



Another Broken Egg?
Mornings at 10am

MOAA MOCHA and MOAA MINGLE
will be quarterly events for members
to participate in comradery.

Look for dates in the newsletter, Facebook, or by email.



Zazu GastroPub
Evenings at 7pm

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.

ECAC 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 and its members.

Join ECAC Online!
<https://ecacmoaa.com/join-ecac>

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

President:	Mike Horsefield	Chair Positions	
Vice President:	Chris Richie	Surviving Spouses Liaison:	Kathy Barto
Secretary:	BJ DeBardeleben	Tops:	Mike Horsefield
Treasurer:	Gordon Bugg	Membership:	Judy Bohler
Director Chapter Affairs:	Ron Carson	Personal Affairs:	Ron Carson
Director Communication:	Jeff Bohler	Newsletter Editor:	Judy Bohler
Director Banquet:	Judy Bohler	Web Site:	Jeff Bohler
Director Legislative:	Ron Barto	Digital Communications:	Jeff Bohler
Past President:	Mike Golden	News Release:	Ron Carson
		ROTC Awards:	Jim Matthews
		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:	Mike Golden



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and Linked In



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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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.