

**ECAC**

# ECAC Newsletter

[ecacmoaa.com](http://ecacmoaa.com)**SEPTEMBER 2025**

## 9/11 NEVER FORGET Mobile Exhibit Visits the East Alabama Regional Training Association

September 11 @ 11:00 am - 7:00 pm

**Southern Union State Community College** 301 Lake Condry Rd, Opelika, AL, 36801

The Mobile will be here several days so check online for times.

The Siller Family started the Tunnel to Towers Foundation to honor the memory and carry on the legacy of their brother, Stephen, a New York City -firefighter (FDNY) who lost his life on September 11, 2001 after strapping 60 lbs. of gear to his back and rushing on foot through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel to the Twin Towers, where he gave up his life while saving others.

In 2013, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation launched its 9/11 NEVER FORGET Mobile Exhibit; a tribute to all those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, including, of course, the 343 members of the FDNY who made the ultimate sacrifice. The high-tech, 83-foot tractor-trailer, which transforms into a 1,100-square-foot exhibit, is a tool to further educate citizens throughout the country about the events of that tragic day.

Welcomed around the country, from the Black Hills of South Dakota to the Tennessee State Fairgrounds, the memorial provides interactive education; including artifacts such as steel beams from the towers, documentary videos, and recordings of first responder radio transmissions. Interactive guided tours are carried out by FDNY firefighters who provide firsthand accounts of the day and its aftermath. The 9/11 NEVER FORGET Mobile Exhibit, which has traveled to nearly 50 states and Canada, has welcomed in over 600,000 people to date.

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation is committed to ensuring WE NEVER FORGET.

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

*Salad:*

Clubhouse Caesar \$8

House \$8/\$12

Add Chicken \$8, Add Shrimp \$11,

Add Steak \$12, Add Salmon \$13

*Dinner:*

All Served with Mashed Potatoes and Grilled Asparagus

8 ox Filet Mignon \$39

Grilled Chicken Breast \$25

Cabana Burger \$15

Fresh Catch Special \$38

**Next Dinner Meeting**  
**September 18, 2025**  
**1800 —Thursday— 6 PM**  
**SOCIAL**

**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, Sept. 16th by 9PM.**

## Board Meeting was Monday, September 9, 2025.

### As of August 31, 2025, the chapter has:

### 2025 Dues

62	Regular Members	\$50	Per regular member.
11	Surviving Spouse Members	\$25	Per Widow/ ROTC student
2	Associate Members	\$5	Per Past Widow/Associate
<b>75</b>	<b>Total Chapter Members</b>		

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

October's Board of Directors meeting will be Monday, October 6th, at 1145 at Chappy's. Any member wishing to attend should contact a Board member for an invitation.



Treasurer Report by Gordon Bugg  
\$3109.87    8-31-25    Bank Balance  
No outstanding deposits, checks, or  
debits from the luau party.

## Minutes from August General Meeting (Luau)

- ✦ The General Meeting was held at the Grove Hill Club House on Saturday, August 16, 2025 from 4:00– 7:00 PM.
- ✦ The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chris Richie at 4:30.
- ✦ The Prayer was offered by Gordon Bugg.
- ✦ 25 members and guests were present for the festivities. Carlos Rabren brought a friend, Rhonda Rogers. Several invited guests attended. They were Brad and Lynn Freeman, Al and Deb Jones, and Ryan and Sarah Stebbins.
- ✦ Charlotte DeBardleben won for best dressed. See photo on page 7.
- ✦ Mike Horsefield competed against Ron Barto for best hula dance. Mike won! See photo on page 7
- ✦ Raffle was won by Carlos Rabren.
- ✦ A great time was had by all and some new members joined us for the fall kickoff.
- ✦ The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM for mingling at the luau.

Secretary  
BJ  
DeBardleben



**ECAC-MOAA's 2025 Meeting Dates**

Sept 18th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Oct 16th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
Nov 20th	Thursday	6PM	Auburn Univ Club
<i>Dec 13th</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>6PM</i>	<i>Horsefield Home</i>



## Quote of the Month

**“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”**

Dan Millman

*MOAA Mission Advocacy*

## ◇ Pass the Major Richard Star Act

The legislation aims to remove the legal roadblocks of Concurrent receipt that prevents retired Service members from receiving both retired pay and VA disability pay if they do not have a VA disability rating of 50% or more, and 20 years or more of service.

**Write** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/43784>

## ◇ Improve TRICARE Access for Families

Help generate support for two TRICARE bills that have a path forward in the FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA):

- **The Improving Access to Prenatal Care for Military Families Act** would allow beneficiaries to switch from TRICARE Prime to Select (or vice versa) outside of the open enrollment period to ensure they have access to prenatal care that meets their needs.
- **The TRICARE OBGYN Treatment and Access without Lags (TOTAL) in Care Act** would launch a five-year pilot program allowing TRICARE Prime beneficiaries to receive obstetrical and gynecological (OBGYN) care without a referral. This commonsense, bipartisan legislation is designed to improve timely access to care – particularly for active duty servicemembers who must get a referral for all care not provided by their primary care manager.

**Write** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/135834>

## ◇ Support Military Spouse Employment

**Write** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/113791>.  
MOAA's Advocacy By Issue Area



Ron Barto  
Legislative Director

## Election Time for the Chapter Officers and Directors



Slate of Nominees in September

Voting in October for Two-Year Terms

Please nominate someone or yourself if you have the skill/time to serve the chapter.

### Job Descriptions

- ✦ President— Preside over monthly chapter board meeting and regular chapter meetings. Attend quarterly council meetings by video calls or in person in Montgomery.
- ✦ Vice President— Find programs for the chapter meetings and substitute for the president if absent.
- ✦ Secretary— Take minutes at board and regular chapter meetings. Provide notification of board meetings with board minutes. Send newsletter editor regular minutes to be published.
- ✦ Treasurer— Maintain bank records, deposit money from events, and write checks for the chapter.
- ✦ Director of Chapter Affairs—Work with Surviving Spouse Liaison and Membership Chair as a back-up. Assist with TOPS, Nominating Committee, and Personal Affairs of chapter
- ✦ Director of Communications—Maintain Website and Social Media feeds (Facebook and LinkedIn), assist newsletter editor as a back-up, and Press releases.
- ✦ Director of Banquets— Acquire venue for monthly meetings, Christmas party, Luau , and ROTC banquet. Also, set up AV equipment if necessary for guest speakers and turn in reservation count to venues.
- ✦ Director of legislative— Update By-Laws when needed, submit monthly article on legislative issues to the newsletter editor, and back-up for council meetings.
- \* ROTC Chair— **This isn't a voting position, but our chapter needs someone who can contact the school's representatives in Jan/Feb. Send letter/form to them by late Feb. (Templates are with Judy Bohler) Make sure each ROTC units sends their student's info and rsvp by April 1st for banquet and newsletter.**

The secretary, BJ DeBardeleben, and Director of Communications, Jeff Bohler, will not be running again. If your skill set would help our chapter, please think about nominating yourself for one of these positions. If you would like to serve in another position, please let us know as many of our folks have served several terms.

---

## President's Letter

Our August chapter meeting (the luau party) was a huge success as a membership drive and as a fun activity to start the second half of the year. Please check page 7 for our new members who joined recently and welcome them at the AU Club meetings. The September meeting has the nominating event, so please think about serving.

Mike Horsefield

President of ECAC-MOAA





## Help Your Survivors Now

### Things to Consider When Planning Ahead!

- ✦ Show/Share all passwords and safe combinations with your spouse and/or other beneficiaries.
- ✦ Utilities including Cell Phones: Put BOTH spouses names on all accounts.
- ✦ Check beneficiaries (DEERS, Life Insurance policies, Investments) annually.

Please contact Kathy Barto, Surviving Spouse Liaison, by phone at 804-317-8588 or by email at [kjbarto3@verizon.net](mailto:kjbarto3@verizon.net) if you have any questions.



### Key September Observances in 2025

**National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month:** This month focuses on raising awareness about suicide prevention resources and fostering a supportive environment within the military community and beyond, according to the Army Resilience Directorate and NAMI.

**National Service Dog Month:** This month highlights the vital role of service dogs in providing independence, support, and healing to veterans and their families, notes a [Facebook post](#).

**Patriot Day (Sept. 11):** This is a solemn observance to commemorate the victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks, [according to Military OneSource](#).

**Air Force Birthday (Sept. 18):** The U.S. Air Force celebrates its founding in 1947 on this day.

**National POW/MIA Recognition Day (Sept. 19):** This day honors prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

**Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day (Sept. 28):** This day recognizes families who have lost a loved one while serving in the military

### 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!

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.



# August Luau



Top Left: L-R Mary Matthews, Jim Matthews, Deb Jones, and Al Jones



Top Right: L-R Ron Barto, Kathy Barto, Chris Richie, and Michele Richie



Above Center: L-R Judy Bohler, Lyn Freeman, Brad Freeman, Sarah Stebbins, Ryan Stebbins, and Jeff Bohler

Bottom Left: L-R Carlos Rabren, Rhonda Rogers, Charlotte DeBardeleben, BJ DeBardeleben, Tom Wynn, and Debbie Wynn

Bottom Right: L-R Gene Sharp, Gordon Bugg, Debra Bugg, Kathy Holtz, and Mike Horsefield







### Best Outfit

Charlotte De-Bardeleben with a stylish Muumuu

### Best Hula Dance

Mike Horsefield (L), but Ron Barto was in a close second.



## New Members



Top Row:

Left— Robert Ryczak and his wife, Sonia. Robert is a retired Army member. We are still looking forward to meeting Robert and Sonia in person.

Right— Ryan Stebbins and his wife, Sarah. Ryan is an active duty Air Force member who attended the luau party.

Bottom Row:

Left- Alfred (Al) Jones and Debra (Deb) Jones. Both Al and Deb are retired Army members who love wine and golf.

Right— David Pritchett and his wife, Julie. David is an active National Guard Army member. They attended the May meeting before the summer break.



## 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	<b>Chair Positions</b>	
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:	Kathy Holtz
		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



Find  
ECAC-MOAA  
on Facebook  
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.

ECAC-MOAA  
P.O. Box 124  
Auburn, AL 36831-0124



**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.