



GEORGIA MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

Military Officers Association of America



Issue # 34

Dec 2022



**Col Ted Chopin (USA, Ret)
Chapter President**

Welcome to the Christmas and Holiday Season!

I hope you are planning a wonderful Season to enjoy all the great opportunities to get together with family and friends and that the new year will bring you renewed faith in the future of our country and all its uniformed services. We are so grateful that they still stand ready to ensure our freedom!

Our chapter has a great program planned for 2023 to support junior and senior ROTC cadets, veterans, as well as to host the Georgia MOAA Convention from 28 September to 1 October. Please go to your calendar now and mark these days so you can attend all the events in Dahlonega and the University of North Georgia.

I know we will be proud to highlight the Corps of Cadets and the wonderful city to conference attendees from all around the state.

Take this opportunity to also look at our website (www.gmcmoaa.org) to review all the things we accomplished this year. Thank you!

Go back to this site early next year to see how we have captured our plans for our award-winning chapter activities in 2023. I expect the new Activity Listing to be up before the end of the first week in January.

Speaking of AWARD WINNING, I was honored to represent all our members at the MOAA National Membership Meeting and Levels of Excellence Award Presentation ceremonies in Kansas City on 27-29 October.

We were one of only three chapters in our state to win the top Five Star award. The President of the Georgia Council of Chapters was with me for the awards. It was because of what so many of you did to support the chapter with your time, money, and expertise that we won this prestigious award.

During the meeting, the new President and CEO of MOAA was announced. Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret) will take the reigns on 4 Jan 2023 from Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, who served in the CEO position for seven years. At the conclusion of the meeting, GEN Gary L. North, USAF (Ret) became the new Chairman of the Board.

Ted Chopin - President
Tom Palmer - 1st VP
Paul Wingo - 2nd VP
Bob Chapman - Treasurer
Tom Billings - Secretary
Larry Munhall - BOD
Ron Viles - BOD
Mike Werner - BOD
Tom Adams - BOD

While the new MOAA leadership will have a new USAF “flavor” both new senior officers will bring the same expertise and focus on advocating for all uniformed services of the United States. They will continue the in-depth expertise in the critical positions and issues MOAA presents to all Congressional members.

Take a look at the announcements and backgrounds of these solid leaders and Board Members at this link: [MOAA - MOAA Announces New President & CEO, Chairman and Board Members](#).

I also attended the Georgia MOAA Convention last month in Athens where I received the Marvin Harris 5-Star awards for both our Print and Web Communications.

The Athens Chapter hosted and laid down the challenge to us to work to meet the great program they presented. We need volunteers now to help our chapter meet this challenge.

With chapter members, Tom Billings, Bob Chapman, and Paul Wingo and wives, we were treated to an extensive tour of the UGA campus to include the old North Campus, the Medical School, the Georgia Botanical Gardens, and Sanford Football Stadium. The latter included time in the President's private box, being on the field, and in the team's locker room. GO DAWGS.

Guest Speaker: Capt. Erin Stone JAGC, USN (Ret) will be our guest speaker at our regular chapter meeting on 19 Jan 2023.



Capt Erin Stone

She is MOAA's Senior Director for Council and Chapter Affairs. She develops organizational programs and processes to directly support a vibrant affiliate system. She, and her staff, are our chapter's primary point of contact at HQ, MOAA. Her mission is to provide effective advice, training, and assistance to volunteer leaders throughout the country. She seeks to enhance cooperation between and among the national BOD, HQ staff, councils, and chapters. Please mark your calendars now to attend and take advantage of this opportunity to hear about MOAA's areas of major emphasis in 2023, as well as asking her questions.

It is time to pay your dues for 2023! Please help us avoid having this task drag out for many months. Go now to our website (www.gmcmoaa.org) to pay your dues (and add an end-of-year donation if you wish) by credit card. This is a secure site provided to us by MOAA, so please take advantage of it and GET IT DONE. If you prefer, send Bob Chapman a check to GMCMOAA, P. O. Box 1703, Dahlonega, GA 30533.

I also hope you purchased some Christmas Wreaths through the Wreaths Across America program using our easy website link. The wreaths will be placed on the grave of a veteran during the Christmas season. I know you want to be part of this program. This is the giving season and there is no better cause.

All Leadership Positions Filled.

For the first time in several years, your chapter has a full compliment of officers and Board Members for the coming year. Look at the listing on page one of this newsletter and congratulate all members who have stood up to help lead this chapter.

Finally, I and the officers and BOD members want to say -- Thank You. You have chosen to be a part of the group of men and women that have taken the motto of "Never Stop Serving" to heart and have accomplished so many important things. You are proven "doers." Your decision to be a supportive member is certainly appreciated.

Thank You! God Bless you and yours and all the best wishes for only good things in 2023.

Still Serving, Ted

UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

We have resumed holding our regular in-person meetings for lunch at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Cumming **on the third Thursday** of each month at 1130 hours, September -- November and January -- May. **No chapter meetings are scheduled during the summer months of Jun, Jul, or Aug.**

The December meeting will be our annual Christmas Dinner and Silent Auction at the Achasta Golf Club near Dahlonega, starting at 1730 hours. Further details on this event can be found posted on our website at: www.gmcmoaa.org.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the following upcoming events:

- Dec 14: VA Bag Delivery to VA
- Dec 15: **GMCMOAA Christmas Dinner/Silent Auction**
- Dec 25: Christmas
- Jan 1: New Year's Day
- Jan 16: MLK Day
- Jan 19: **GMCMOAA Meeting**
- Feb 14: Valentine's Day
- Feb 16: **GMCMOAA Meeting**
- Feb 20: Presidents' Day
- Mar 12: Daylight Saving Time begins (and becomes permanent)
- Mar 16: **GMCMOAA Meeting**
- Mar 17: St Patrick's Day
- Apr 9: Easter
- Apr 14-!6: Parents-Alumni Weekend at UNG
- Apr 20: **GMCMOAA Meeting**
- May 14: Mother's Day
- May 18: **GMCMOAA Meeting**
- May 20: Armed Forces Day
- May 29: Memorial Day
- Jun 14: Flag Day
- Jun 18: Father's Day
- Sep 29 – Oct 1 GAMOAA Council Conference here!



MOAA MISSION STATEMENT

“Promote and maintain a strong national defense and ensure our nation keeps its commitments to all who have served.”

Any comments for MOAA should be sent to: <http://takeaction.moaa.org>

GMCMOAA MISSION STATEMENT

“To advocate for our community and connect it to the nation we serve.”

The Georgia Mountain Chapter of MOAA (GMCMOAA) is a non-profit veteran's association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and preserving the earned entitlements of members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors.

Our chapter and our national MOAA headquarters are non-partisan organizations whose membership is open to all who hold or have ever held a commission or a warrant in any component of the U. S. Army, Navy, USMC, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or NOAA and their surviving spouses.

Chapter dues are \$25 per year and are due the first of December.

SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction is *fast* approaching (Dec 15th), and members are encouraged to round up a donation or two for this fun event. Gifts for men and women are needed. Please contact Larry Munhall with the gift information so that he can fill out a bid sheet on each item. His email address is: larry4541@me.com and his cell number is 404-786-9841.

TREASURER'S CORNER

Bob Chapman (Lt Cdr (Ret), USN)

Happy Holidays! Our chapter is nearing the end of 2022 with continued, strong recovery in several areas. As of 30 November, our paid membership totaled 58, and 28 have already paid dues for 2023. Membership for 2021 totaled 51 and 56 for 2020.

For the chapter's upcoming Christmas Dinner and Silent Auction, we have now received 56 reservations. This year very handily exceeds last year's registrations of 47, and pre-COVID 2019 attendance of 49. Our dinner venue at Achasta can accommodate 60-70, so there is still time to register and attend.

Dinner cost is \$35 per person and reservations can be made up to 4 days prior to the dinner date. Registration forms are posted on the GMCMOAA website and can be completed and emailed directly to me at chapmanb@mindspring.com.

Chapter dues are due now and remain at \$25. Payment can be made by credit/debit card via our website or even the national MOAA website. Check payments can be mailed to: GMCMOAA, P. O. Box 1703, Dahlonega, GA 30533.

The website application also allows for any extra gift you may wish to donate. Several gifts have been made over the past two months, particularly for VA Gift Cards. If you want to designate your gift to a particular program, please let me know.

Please note - - any donations added to your 2023 dues payments made online or by check, postmarked on or before 31 Dec 2022, are considered as Tax Year 2022.

SENIOR ROTC

We have not had any SROTC commissionings since our last newsletter, however, one is scheduled to occur December 16th. An estimated 24 cadets are scheduled to receive their gold bars. We will have our regular team there to participate in this event.

MIXON, LORD into Hall of Fame



Col (Ret) Gerald Lord with COL Bryan Kirk and Lt Gen (Ret) Randy Mixon

Two UNG alumni were inducted into the ROTC Hall of Fame this fall.

After serving as the UNG Corps of Cadets Brigade Commander, Lt Gen Mixon served 36 years on active duty in command positions from platoon to theater level. His final two assignments were as the CG of the 25th Inf Division and then as the CG of the US Army, Pacific.

Col Lord served more than 30 years, including stints as the PMS and Commandant of UNG Cadets. He served combat tours in RVN. His final active-duty assignment was as the Commander of the Army Garrison at Ft. McPherson.

The UNG Army ROTC Hall of Fame was established in 2016 and honors graduates of Army ROTC who have distinguished themselves in military or civilian pursuits. Other previous inductees are: LTG Burton Patrick, '57, BG David Grange, '69, Bob Matthews, '71, MG Bud Thrasher, '72, Col Tom Palmer, '73, LTG James Terry, '78, and GEN Stephen Townsend, '82.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Larry Munhall (USCG)

Another sponsorship year has ended for Wreaths Across America. It was the Georgia Mountain Chapter's best year of the past six years.

After a poor sales year in 2019, we have had a steady increase in paid Wreath sales for the past 3 years. This year's Matching Wreath credits were the most of any year.

My estimate of the total Wreath sponsorship for this year is over 290. (This article was written before wreath sales ended.)

I would like to thank all of you that supported Wreaths Across America. It is a wonderful program in remembrance of loved ones and of those who sacrificed so much for this great country.

DECEMBER 17TH is NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY. That is the day wreaths will be placed on the graves.

Go to the Georgia National Cemetery near Canton, GA over the Christmas season and see wreaths at every marker.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

DR. Ron Crews (Ch. COL, Ret)

Advent Reflections

My favorite Advent Hymn is "O Come, O Come, Immanuel." These haunting words trace back to the ninth century, composed by Monks to sing in the final weeks leading to the Christmas Mass. The most common translation and melody we use was adopted in the 19th century. I love the minor key that gives it a

unique sound when sung by a congregation.

These words speak to my heart and I hope will strengthen your Faith that we are not alone; we long for a redeemer to come, to set all things right and to make all things new.

The season of Advent is to remind us that our Redeemer has come and that He is coming again. So, we sing these words as the longings of ancient Israel for a Messiah and our longings for Messiah to come again.

That is the Truth and Hope of the Gospel. Christ has come; Christ is coming again.

Take a few moments and read these words. I encourage you to read them aloud. Sing them or listen to one of many recordings you can find on You Tube.

*"O come, O come, Immanuel and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appears.*

*O come, O King of David, come and open wide our Heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road and bar the way to death's abode.*

*O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.*

*O come, O King of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease and be Yourself our King of Peace!*

*Rejoice, Rejoice, Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

CHRISTMAS DAY, DEC 25TH

Christmas is celebrated both as a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are religious and secular in nature.



Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the birthday of Jesus, whose teachings form the basis of their religion.

In the early years of Christianity, Easter was the main holiday; the birth of Jesus was not celebrated until the fourth century when church officials decided to celebrate His birth.

Pope Julius I chose December 25th in an effort to absorb other ongoing traditions and to be near the winter solstice. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the custom spread to Egypt by 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century.

It wasn't until the 19th century that the Americans began to embrace Christmas, changing it from a raucous, carnival holiday into a family-centered day of peace and nostalgia. Christmas provided families with a day when they could lavish attention and gifts on their children without "spoiling" them.

Before long, decorated trees, holiday cards and gift-giving became additional traditions.

QUOTES TO REMEMBER

“Grief is the price we pay for love.”
Queen Elizabeth

“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.” *Albert Einstein*

“It is only through labor and painful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage, that we move on to better things.” *President Theodore Roosevelt*

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”
Winston Churchill

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.” *Cicero*

“Today I will do what others won’t do, tomorrow I can accomplish what others can’t.” *Jerry Rice, NFL Player*

5-STAR AWARD



Col Chopin receives 5-Star Award

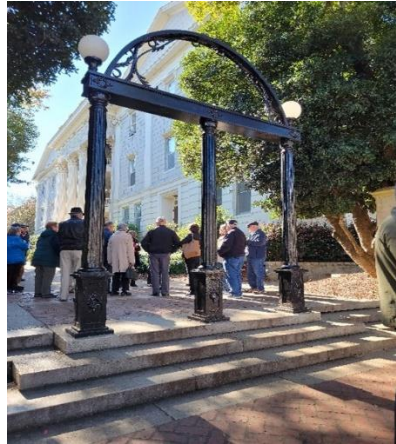
From 27-29 October, COL Chopin represented our chapter at the annual MOAA Membership Meeting and Award Ceremony in Kansas City, MO. There, he was given the 5-Star Award recognizing our chapter as an “Outstanding” organization.

As one of the three chapter award winners in Georgia, it was his honor to receive the 5-Star Award from the

Chairman of the Board, GEN Gary Sharp (on right) and MOAA CEO and President LTG Dana Atkins.

Accompanying COL Chopin were his wife, Tina, and the Georgia Council President, LTC Barry Gardner and his wife, Gloria.

GMCMOAA MEMBERS ATTEND ATHENS STATE CONVENTION

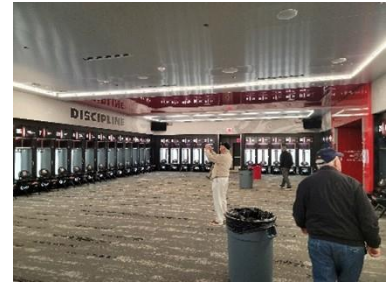


UGA’s Famous Arch

In mid-November, four of our chapter members attended the Georgia MOAA Convention held in Athens. In addition to the training given and the awards bestowed, all attendees were given a tour of the university’s campus, which included the Medical School, the Old North Campus, and Sanford Football stadium.



There they enjoyed the view from the University President’s box and then got a close-up and personal private tour of the football team’s locker room.



These high achievers finally decided to form up a “secret weapon” football team that UGA could fall back on if things went terribly wrong. Hopefully, that won’t happen, as most of them had trouble just standing up after this pose.



HEALTH NEWS

ALZHEIMER’S. An experimental drug has shown promising results against Alzheimer’s in a large-scale clinical trial, slowing cognitive and functional decline 27%. The preliminary findings offered renewed hope for a class of previously used drugs, but with different protocols.

The medication, lecanemab, works by reducing tangled clumps of beta amyloid in the brain.

The lecanemab trial involved 1,800 participants with mild cognitive impairment. After six months, the medicated group had a “highly statistically significant” reduction in their cognitive decline compared with the placebo group.

While some experts caution that the benefits of lecanemab are likely to be

small; others say this is a “huge breakthrough”.

Japanese pharma, Eisai, and its American partner, Biogen, will apply for accelerated regulatory approval, which could come as soon as early next year. *The Washington Post*

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MALARIA. Scientists at Oxford University have developed a malaria vaccine that has been called “world changing.” Doctors have tried for over a century to make a vaccine for malaria, which kills more than 400,000 people annually, mostly African children.

In a trial involving 450 children, the injection R21 provided up to 80% protection against the deadly mosquito-borne disease. And, it’s cheap to make, costing only a few dollars per treatment.

The Oxford team will soon begin seeking regulatory approval. If regulators give the okay, the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Insitute of India, will produce over 200 million doses a year. *BBC.com*

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DID YOU KNOW?

In a major retreat, Russia departed Kherson in mid-November, the only regional capital captured since invading Ukraine in February. Russian troops blew up bridges across the Dnipro River behind them as they fled. The loss of the city is a huge blow to Putin, coming just weeks after he announced the “forever” annexation of Kherson and three other regions. Russian troops are growing restless and are openly complaining that their units are being used as cannon fodder in ill-

conceived combat plans and lack of support. *The Week Magazine*

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A block of 1,300 Starlink satellite internet units used for combat related operations suddenly went down across Ukraine last month “due to lack of funding.” SpaceX was charging Ukraine \$3.25 million a month to keep over 25,000 of these space units connected, but their unpaid bill was almost \$20 million by the end of September. Starlink has been a “game-changing source of communication” for Ukraine’s military ever since the invasion.

CNN.com

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The U. S. national debt recently topped \$31 trillion for the first time, a milestone that comes amid rising interest rates that will increase the cost of carrying that debt. America’s debt climbed \$7.9 trillion during the Trump administration and has increased another \$3.3 trillion during the first two years of the Biden administration. *CNN.com*

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The Pentagon will pay the travel costs of service members who choose to go to states where they can legally receive abortions. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said “significant numbers of service members are based in states that limit or restrict abortion access, impeding our ability to recruit, retain, and maintain the readiness of a highly qualified force.” *Politico*

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Low water levels in the Mississippi River caused by severe drought have left transport barges unable to pass,

stalling delivery of crops from Mid-western farms, and other goods.



The Army Corps of Engineers is dredging the river to get traffic moving, as more than 2,500 stalled barges wait to pass downriver and other boats are left stranded in the mud. *CNN.com*

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Canada dropped all of its Covid restrictions for visitors to their country in mid-October. Tourists will no longer be required to show proof of vaccinations, get tested or quarantined, or wear a mask on planes or trains. *Canada Transportation Minister*

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The average price for a domestic round-trip flight during Thanksgiving was more than \$450. Prices for Christmas flights have already reached five-year highs and could rise above \$580 on average, according to travel booking site Hooper. *The New York Times*

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Despite a cutoff from Russia, the benchmark European price of natural gas fell below \$100 per megawatt hour, a level that is more than 70% below its record in August. European gas storage facilities have reached more than 90% of their capacity, while a warmer-than-usual October has kept consumption 20% below normal. *Financial Times*

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The housing slowdown continues. There were 130,000 fewer new homes sold in September than a year ago, a drop of 17.6%. It dropped 10.9% in August. Also, the median sales price of a newly constructed home was \$470,600, up nearly 14% from a year ago. *Yahoo Finance*

This summer was Europe's hottest on record, with temperatures soaring to 109 in France, 104 in U.K., and 102 in Germany. Fewer than 5% of



Barcelona beach

homes in those countries have air conditioning. *Time*

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The White House plans to tap 15 million more barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to keep fuel prices down. The December release will be the last of the 180 million barrels authorized to be sold. The reserve is at its lowest level in nearly 40 years. The plan is to buy oil to refill the reserve once prices drop. *Politico*

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NASA, which had 19,000 employees and a federal budget of \$23.3 billion in 2021, estimates the total economic output linked to its missions and research at \$71.2 billion, supporting about 340,000 jobs in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. *CNBC.com*

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Though Germany has twice California's population, California's gross domestic product is poised to

hit \$3.5 trillion this year and overtake Germany's as the fourth-largest in the world after the U. S., China, and Japan. *Bloomberg*

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The average starting salary of a graduate with a bachelor's degree in 2021 was \$58,862, while a master's degree earned \$72,105 - - about 22% more, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. That's the smallest gap since NACE started collecting the data in 2015. *Bloomberg*

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In October, auto buyers paid an average of about \$45,600 for a new car or truck, down from a peak of \$46,175 in July. It's still 33% higher than before the pandemic, according to research firm J. D. Power. *The Wall Street Journal*

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Rivian issued a recall of nearly all its electric vehicles. The carmaker, backed by Amazon and Ford, has delivered 13,198 trucks since last year but recalled about 13,000 of them "due to a loose fastener that could cause the driver to lose steering control." Rivian's value fell by over \$2 billion due to concerns that the company may not be able to meet its 2023 production target. The company already cut its 2022 production target by half. *Reuters*

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Home Depot is in the process of verifying military discounts with just your phone number, similar to Lowe's. You must first enroll at [homedepot.com/military/discount](https://www.homedepot.com/military/discount) and complete your military verification. Once completed and approved, you should be set.

Spouses are also eligible but must set up their own separate account. (*This worked fine in the Dawsonville HD last week, but not in the Gainesville HD, so a learning curve is ongoing.*)

FILLING VA BAGS

On December 5th, dozen of members from various veterans and civic groups met in the Dahlenega American Legion to pack 150 goodie bags to go to the veterans in the VA Hospital in Atlanta.



This is an annual event that our chapter participates in and is spearheaded by our own Paul Wingo.

The bags, filled with socks, toiletries, snacks, masks, and writing materials, are warmly received by the veterans. Many of the vets have shared with us that this is the only gift they receive at Christmas.



The bags will be delivered on December 15th.

Ron Viles COL (Ret,USA), Editor

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