



**ECAC**

# ECAC Newsletter

[ecacmoaa.com](http://ecacmoaa.com)

**APRIL 2024**



## MOAA Award Program

This month’s presentation will be our annual Senior and Junior ROTC Awards Ceremony, with CDR Jeffrey Bohler 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–18 April 2024**

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](mailto:bohler1107@charter.net) by Monday, 15 April 2024 by 1200.**

**Meal cost per person is \$35 payable with cash or check to ECAC-MOAA and award recipients are our guests (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

Grill Chicken/ Lemon Caper Salmon

Saugahatchee Potatoes/ Wild Rice

Mixed Vegetables/ Honey Carrots

Apple or Peach Cobbler

Tea & Water

## Board Meeting was Monday, April 1, 2024.

| As of March 31, 2024, the chapter has: | 2024 Dues                                   |
|--|---|
| 72 Regular Members                     | <b>\$20</b> Per regular member.             |
| 11 Surviving Spouse Members            | <b>\$15</b> Per dual member.                |
| 2 Associate Members                    | <b>\$5</b> Per Widow/Associate/ROTC student |
| <b>85 Total Chapter Members</b>        |   |

***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 6th, at 1130 at Chappy's. Any member wishing to attend should contact a Board member for an invitation.



Treasurer Report by Gordon Bugg  
 \$4089.28 3-31-24 Bank Balance  
 Two outstanding items  
 Checks for \$68 and \$100

# Minutes from March General Meeting

- The meeting was held at the Auburn University Club and was called to order by Mike Horsefield at 6:27 p.m. There were 29 members and guests present.
  - The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Debra Bugg.
  - The prayer was offered by Danny Sample.
  - Mike welcomed everyone to the general meeting. Mike then introduced three new members and their spouses; Ron and Darlene Brown, Bob and Jenny Hand, and Robert and Michelle Straw.
  - The guest speaker for the night was David Moore. David gave a presentation about the recent illness and loss of his wife Teresa and the realities of health care options and lessons he learned. Thanks David for such an insightful and heartfelt discussion.
  - Danny Sample, former Director of Alabama MOAA, presented Mike with a challenge coin and thanked him for running a great chapter.
- ✦ The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.



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](#)

**ECAC-MOAA's 2024 Meeting Dates**

|                   |                 |             |                     |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| <b>April 18th</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>6PM</b>  | <b>Saugahatchee</b> |
| May 16th          | Thursday        | 6PM         | Auburn Univ Club    |
| June & July       | No Meeting      |             |                     |
| August 17th       | Saturday        | 4PM         | Grove Hill Luau     |
| Sept 19th         | Thursday        | 6PM         | Auburn Univ Club    |
| Oct 17th          | Thursday        | 6PM         | Auburn Univ Club    |
| Nov 21st          | Thursday        | 6PM         | Auburn Univ Club    |
| <b>Dec 14th</b>   | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>11AM</b> | <b>Saugahatchee</b> |

*One's destination is never a place,  
but a new way of seeing things.*  
Henry Miller

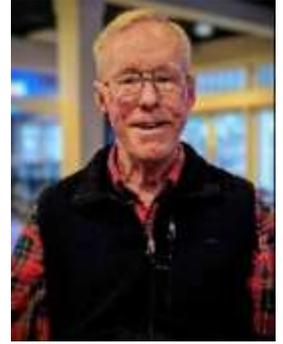


On March 18th Auburn University held their Veterans Golf Classic to support the AU Student Veteran Association and raise money for the veterans programs on campus. It was held at the Auburn University Club with MOAA secretary, BJ DeBardeleben, attending to work the event. Left is a photo of BJ DeBardeleben on the left and Drew Lufkin, President of the AU Student Veterans Association, on the right holding a sign. The East Central Alabama Chapter of MOAA sponsored this golf hole.

**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 Remembrance Of



On March 14, 2024, Linus Henry Fiely passed away peacefully in his home surrounded by his wife, daughter, and son. He fought valiantly against Parkinson's cruel effects, and Linus refused to let it rob him of his dignity. He stayed strong till the end. More importantly, every person who met Linus remembers him as a wonderful man, person, and human being worth emulating. Heartfelt gratitude is extended to his caregivers from Beyond Home Care, neighbors, family, Gentiva Hospice, and friends who supported him through his final journey.

Linus was born in Fort Recovery, Ohio on August 13, 1935. He met the love of his life, Elizabeth, on a trip to NYC in 1955. They married in 1957 following his graduation from University of Dayton and commissioning as an Army Field Artillery officer.

He served assignments around the world including various Army units at Budagen, Germany; flight school at Ft. Rucker; two tours in Vietnam as an OV-1 "Mohawk" pilot; Ohio State University for his master's degree; Battalion Commander at Ft. Sill; Professor of Military Science at Auburn University; and Community Commander in Neu Ulm, Germany. Linus ultimately retired as a Colonel in 1986 after his final assignment as the Army liaison officer to the Marines in Quantico.

Linus served as an Assistant Principal at Auburn High School after his retirement from the military. Linus and Liz moved to their new home in Stillwaters on Lake Martin in 1989. They returned to Auburn in 2019.

Linus is survived by his wife Liz; children Diane, and David (Tam); two grandsons, Jonathan (Jennifer) and Mark (Alana); five great-grandchildren, Iris, Corvin, Piper, Winnie, and Mina; and his brother Bob.

There will be a viewing from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at the Jeffcoat-Trant Funeral Home in Auburn on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, and a funeral Mass at 11:00 am on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church. Linus will be buried at a future date in Arlington National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, we might suggest a donation to [Parkinson.org](https://www.parkinson.org) or [The Michael J. Fox Foundation](https://www.michaeljfox.org).

Louise Henn, 77, of Opelika, Alabama, passed away at her home on March 26, 2024. Born on June 9, 1946, in Washington, Georgia, Louise was a loving mother, wife, sister, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt, and friend.

She had an avid passion for Elvis and Elvis memorabilia and also loved collecting other genres including dolls and chicken décor. Louise adored her cats and dogs, as well as all animals. Decorating her home for Christmas brought her immense joy and made it a cherished gathering place for her family.

Louise had an entrepreneurial spirit and, alongside her late husband Tom, was the owner of The Henn House in Tallahassee, Florida, where they specialized in selling collectibles and antiques.

She is survived by her son Billy (Normi) Strickland, daughter Harriett (Brian) Hodges, grandson Wesley (Brittney) Hodges, granddaughter Christa (Keith) Washington, **partner Les "Earl" Digman**, and was preceded in death by her father William J Robinson, mother Genieva Reid Robinson, husband Thomas Henn, sister Mary Harrison, and brothers Joe, Buddy, Troy, and Roy Robinson.



**There will be a small gathering at Earl Digman's home on April 20, 2024, Saturday at 1:00 PM. Digman's address is 1937 Lee Rd #112 Opelika, AL 36804.**

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any gifts or donations be made to Southeast Hospice Network in Opelika, Alabama. For more information, contact Southeast Hospice Network @ 334-748-9400.

Samuel George Coombs, a previous member, passed away on March 28, 2024 at the age of 80. He was born on July 18, 1943 and was in the Army from 1960-1982.

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Major George Wingard, USAF, RET.  
October 12, 1948 - March 26, 2024

George was the middle son of Professor Robert Wingard, Sr., and Estelle Wingard. He was a great-grandson of John Jenkins Wilmore, the first dean of engineering at Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Dean Wilmore served in that position from 1908 until his death in 1943. The building on campus, Wilmore Labs and the street Wilmore Drive were named in his honor.

George was a graduate of Auburn High School, Auburn University and did graduate work on a MBA at Central Michigan University. He was a graduate of the following service schools: Air Force Squadron Officer School, Air Force Air Command and Staff College and the Army National Defense University, National Security Management Course. George's high school senior class of 1966 was the last class to graduate from the old high school on Samford Avenue. When George started school in Auburn in 1955, that school housed all 12 grades in two buildings. That truly was back when Auburn was small and was the "Loveliest village of the plain." The first branch of his family, The Whitakers, arrived in Auburn in 1879 and someone has been here ever since, either associated with the college or a business.

After graduation from Auburn University, he was accepted for the Air Force Officer Training School with a follow-on assignment to attend undergraduate navigator training. Between those two assignments he married his beloved wife, Jackie London, on 17 April 1971 and they were married for 46 years, four months and 28 days until her death on September 15, 2017. After earning his wings, George was assigned to an element of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) as a line navigator in the KC-135A air refueling aircraft. SAC was part of the Nuclear Triad during the Cold War, providing the airborne and missile component while the Navy provided the submarine launched MIRV missiles. Upon retirement, George had accumulated over 3200 flying hours of which 132 were combat hours which included 29 combat sorties during the Vietnam War. Some of his awards and decorations are: Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster; Air Medal; Air Force Commendation Medal; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with "V" Valor device and two oak leaf clusters; Vietnam Service Medal and others. After Air Force retirement, he and Jackie moved to Opelika and George worked for a number of years as the Business Office Manager for Opelika Welding, Machine and Supply, Inc. and then it was re-named and became Opelika Metalfab, Inc.

George was a member of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Auburn University Alumni Association, American Diabetes Association (ADA), National Rifle Association (NRA), Auburn University Samford Club, The James E. Foy Loyalty Society, Tigers Unlimited and the North Opelika Historic Neighborhood Association (NOHNA). In NOHNA, he served as a board member or officer for many years. NOHNA brought the city of Opelika the Victorian Front Porch Christmas Tour and NOHNA ran it from December 1993 until December 2006. At that time, the creator of the life size Santas moved and the city bought the Santa figures and the city has continued the tour ever since.

George is survived by one brother and a sister-in-law.

There will be no visitation. **There will be a graveside burial of his ashes at the family plot in Pine Hill Cemetery on Armstrong Street in Auburn on 13 April at 10:30 AM.** His lifelong friend, Commander Robert L. Hare, will speak and read a prepared statement. Half of his ashes will be buried there and the rest will be distributed into the wind and water of his beloved Lake Martin along with ashes of his beloved Jackie. Honorary ash bearers will be Sam Chesnutt, Bobby Chesnutt, Jack Marshall, Rick Burns, Mike Evans, and Bobby Hare.

The family wishes to thank Synergy Home Care for their dedication to George for these last several months.

Friends are invited for a gathering at 3809 Heritage Place Opelika, Alabama 36804 immediately after the graveside service.

George is at peace now and finally reunited with his beloved Jackie, whom he has missed dearly. Vaya Con Dios, George.

A final word for all that have served and are now serving and that will serve in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. In December 1776 Thomas Paine wrote a paper entitled "The Crisis" to help inspire more men and women to come forward to help defeat the British. He wrote: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."



Photo Left: Left Danny Sample presents right Mike Horsefield a coin from the Birmingham chapter.

At the March chapter meeting, member Danny Sample who was on the Board of Directors of the Greater Birmingham Chapter of MOAA presented East Central Alabama chapter president Mike Horsefield with a coin. Danny was a designated presenter of the Greater Birmingham Chapter coin to a veteran who had made a significant contribution to MOAA. The coin was presented to Mike in recognition of his efforts in promoting the MOAA cause through the local chapter's growth and the programs the chapter promotes.

**\*\*\*\*\*MOAA Website/Account Upgrades\*\*\*\*\***

During the transition, which began April 1, members will not be able to log into their membership accounts online. To make a change to your account during this time, or to renew or upgrade your membership, email MOAA's Member Service Center (MSC) at [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org) or call (800) 234-MOAA (6622). These changes will go into effect following the completion of this transition. Please anticipate a brief delay before these are reflected on the website.

**Login Changes**

Once the new system is in place, your "email of record" will replace your username when accessing your online account. Contact the MSC if you have multiple emails on file with MOAA to determine your email of record. Once the new membership database is live, your password will need to be reset. Access to MOAA's Legislative Action Center will not be affected. Further instructions on using the new system will be available in the coming weeks.

# Thirteen Students Receive ECAC-MOAA Awards



ECAC-MOAA Military Academy Award Winner



**Southern Preparatory Military Academy**

**Sean Turner**

Cadet Sean Turner is a Senior in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the academy. He currently is the Battalion XO. Cadet Turner is the drill team Commander and has been the drill commander for 2 years. Cadet Turner has been in several leadership positions. He will be our Valedictorian for school year 23-24. He has been on our cross country team, baseball team, rifle team, and a member of our Beta club. Currently he has applied to West Point and is waiting to hear on that.



## ECAC-MOAA Tuskegee Univ. ROTC Award Winners



Tuskegee University Air Force ROTC

Deyana Frazier

Over the past year Cadet Colonel Deyana Frazier has demonstrated a high degree of leadership. She started off the academic year strong, serving as the Cadet Vice Wing Commander and successfully managed the cadet wing's 200% growth, inventing new processes and deliberately developing new methods of preserving new institutional knowledge the cadet wing gained. She then was the senior ranking cadet for a team of five Tuskegee University AFROTC cadets on a five-day long trip to the Air Force's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access conference in Washington D.C. and shared her perspective as a minority going through the Air Force accessions process. She then brought back her lessons learned from the conference and implemented them within the cadet wing. She then led the planning efforts and presided as master of ceremonies for a joint dining-in for over 150 cadets and mid-shipmen at Tuskegee University.

Cadet Frazier was then hand selected to participate in the Air Force's Operation PATHFINDER wargame which deliberately capitalizes on diversity among service members to develop courses of action to compete and win against the Peoples Republic of China with the intent replicating the wargaming scenarios for professional military training within the cadet wing. Cadet Frazier also focused heavily on community involvement as the commander of Tuskegee University's Arnold Air Society Squadron, organized four community service events, recruited nine additional members (doubling the student organization's size), and secured funding from Tuskegee University for three members to attend the Arnold Air Society's National Conclave in San Diego, California. On top of that, Deyana boasts a 3.643 Cumulative Grade Point Average in her pursuit of a Bachelor's of Science in Mechanical Engineering. She is on track to graduate and commission in the Spring of 2025 and plans on flying Remotely Piloted Aircraft in the world's finest Air Force.

Tuskegee University Naval ROTC Navy

Janae Wilson

Midshipman Second Class Janae Wilson is a native of Houston, Texas and a 2021 graduate of Mayde Creek High School. She is currently battalion commanding officer of the Tuskegee University NROTC battalion, as well as a part-time research assistant intern with the Department of Defense, Aerospace Education Research and Innovation Center (DoD-AERIC) at Tuskegee University.

Midshipman Wilson is a junior chemical engineering major with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5. She joined Tuskegee University Naval ROTC in fall of 2021 as a freshman college programmer and received a 3-year side-load scholarship in spring of 2022. While working towards her degree, she served as community service officer, platoon chief, platoon commander, and battalion commander. She plans to graduate and commission in May 2026. In her free time over the summer, she volunteers at a STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) camp teaching kids advanced robotics and biological life sciences.

Upon commissioning, she plans to attend nuclear school and become a submarine officer. She wants to graduate with a 3.8 cumulative grade point average, to pass her nuclear interview and to be a notable mentor to the midshipmen in her unit.

Tuskegee University Naval ROTC Marine

Caleb Mekiah Alexander

Midshipman Third Class Caleb Alexander was born in Lemoore, California and spent years in several different countries during his upbringing as his father is prior Navy. He attended Ben Lomond High School in Ogden, Utah and was a member of the basketball team for each year he was there and served as the team captain for 2 years. He also started the first NAACP youth chapter in northern Utah and started the first Black student union in his district and served as its President until he graduated in 2022.

He enrolled at Tuskegee University in August of 2022 with a major in Political Science and a four-year Marine option NROTC scholarship. Midshipman Alexander chose NROTC because it aligned with everything he had come to know and believed it was his door to success. He currently has a cumulative GPA of 3.22. Midshipman Alexander plans to commission in May 2026. Following commissioning he will attend The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia and he hopes to serve in a ground combat arms role.

Midshipman Alexander enjoys pushing himself to his limits, mentoring and inspiring others, and playing basketball. His goals include obtaining a 3.5 GPA or higher during his time in college, maintaining a "280" or higher fitness standard, and making a lasting impact on his unit and the Marine Corps. He plans to serve his time as a Marine Corps officer until retirement (20 years).

## Tuskegee University Army ROTC

### De’Nizha Lynette Ray

Cadet First Sergeant De’Nizha Ray was born in Nashville, TN and has lived there consecutively for 18 years until relocating to Tuskegee, AL for college. Before heading to college, Cadet Ray graduated from Hillsboro High school class of 2021. During her years in high school, Cadet Ray was a Varsity Cheerleader for Hillsboro and a competitive Cheerleader for ‘Legacy’ for her freshman and sophomore year. Cadet Ray was also a member of two well-known groups in the school community such as an AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) student as well as having the privilege of being one of the first freshmen members of CORE (Culture Over a Restorative Environment).

Once graduated from Hillsboro, Cadet Ray made the decision to continue her education journey at Tuskegee University as an Animal Science Major turned Elementary Education major. Early in her journey, Cadet Ray realized she wouldn’t be able to tackle the financial burden of college alone. Coming from a low-income family, she lacked community, dependability and foundation. She knew she needed an outlet and that she wanted to do more with her life and college experience. She was able to fulfill this sense of deeper purpose by joining Army ROTC. Cadet Ray joined ROTC her freshman year and has since excelled in her training to become an army officer. She expects to fulfill her duties by serving in the Active-duty component intending to branch as an Air defense artillery officer.

Cadet Ray enjoys utilizing her free time volunteering for a ‘Read to me’ program through the English department of Tuskegee and spending time with friends. Her short-term goals include receiving an ‘O’ at CST and gaining her wings through air assault school this summer, receiving a high score for the record ACFT, and becoming Battalion Commander of the Golden Tiger Battalion during her MS4 year. Her long-term goals include creating financial stability within her family, proudly serving a full 20 years active duty and making long term impact on younger future officers like herself.



## ECAC-MOAA Auburn Univ. ROTC Award Winners



### Auburn University Air Force ROTC

#### Ethan C. Davis

Cadet 1st Lieutenant Ethan Davis was born in Memphis, Tennessee and has lived in various locations across the South due to his father being Active Duty Air Force. Most recently a native of Huntsville, Alabama, Cadet Davis graduated from High School in December of 2020 as a dual enrolled student and earned his Associates Degree in General Science upon graduation. While still a high school student, he enlisted in the Alabama Air National Guard. Then after graduation, he completed over 6 months of basic and technical training at Lackland AFB, TX. He has remained active in sports throughout the years, including seasons of soccer, ultimate frisbee, and co-captaining the Auburn Handball Team.

He enrolled at Auburn University in January of 2022 majoring in Economics along with joining Auburn AFROTC. He chose to join AFROTC after his father and grandfather served over 20 years each as Air Force Officers, In addition to his strong belief in the US Constitution and what our nation stands for. Cadet Davis enlisted in the 117<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard in August of 2020 and continues to serve in the reserve component as a Security Forces member. In October of 2023, he was promoted to Senior Airman and has had many great experiences in the Guard, such as recently participating in a security detail for the Vice President. Cadet Davis plans to commission into the Active Duty Air Force as a Pilot, raise a family in the near future, and travel to all 7 continents!

### Auburn University Army ROTC

#### Anna Grace England

Cadet SSG Anna Grace England was born and raised in Florence, Alabama where she attended Brooks High School. During high school she was heavily involved in sports and clubs. She was captain of the basketball and softball teams her junior and senior year. She was a part of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and a student ambassador. She graduated from Brooks High school in May of 2017 and was voted best all-around by her fellow classmates.

In May of 2022 Anna graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor’s degree in environmental sciences and briefly worked for Tennessee Valley Authority at Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant serving as a Chemistry and Radiological Technician. In the spring of 2023 Anna chose to pursue a master’s degree in Natural Resources at Auburn University and decided to join the ROTC program. Last summer leading into her first semester of graduate school, Anna attended basic camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky where she performed with distinction resulting in her selection above 120 other cadets to receive the Military Order of the Purple Heart award for merit and high character. Anna currently holds a 4.0 GPA and is a member of the Commander’s Cup basketball team.

CDT England joined Army ROTC because she felt a strong calling to serve others from a more powerful platform with the goal of going active duty and serving full time. She is a two-year scholarship winner and enjoys meeting new people through the Army, and being around the hard-working personalities that are attracted to ROTC.

Outside of ROTC, she enjoys CrossFit, cooking, and hunting. All which correlate with living a healthy lifestyle which she holds of extreme importance. Short term goals for her are to continue working and competing in CrossFit competitions that help build her strength and endurance. Long term goals include graduating with her master’s degree in May of 2025 and also attending specialty schools within the Army. She has already been selected to attend airborne school this summer and has hopes of going to air assault and arctic school in her future career.

## Auburn University Naval ROTC Navy

## Caleb Maxwell

Midshipman Second Class Caleb Maxwell was born in Silver Spring, Maryland and spent years in two different states during his upbringing. He attended Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School in Atlanta, Georgia and was a member of the swim team for each year he was there and served as the team captain for 2 years. He enrolled at Auburn University in August of 2021 with a major in Building Science and a four-year Navy option NROTC scholarship. Midshipman Maxwell chose NROTC because he believes in the Navy core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. He currently has a cumulative GPA of 3.64.

Midshipman Maxwell plans to commission in December 2025. Following commissioning he hopes to serve in the surface warfare community. Midshipman Maxwell enjoys pushing himself to his limits, mentoring and inspiring others, and swimming. His goals include maintaining a 3.6 GPA or higher during his time in college, maintaining a "280" or higher fitness standard, and making a lasting impact on his unit and the Navy. He plans to serve his time as a Navy officer until retirement.

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**Auburn University Naval ROTC Marine**
**Noah Koons**

Midshipman First Class Noah Koons was born in Woodland Hills, California and grew up in Stevenson Ranch, California. He attended West Ranch High School and was a member of both the soccer and track team. Midshipman Koons graduated in May of 2020. He was vice president of Circle of Friends, a club that developed a support structure for those with mental disabilities, as well as a member of his school's student government body, while he worked at his local Six Flags.

He enrolled at Auburn University in August 2020, majoring in Industrial and Systems Engineering with a four-year Marine option NROTC scholarship. Midshipman Koons chose NROTC to pursue his goal of commissioning as a Marine Corps officer. He has held multiple billets in the NROTC program such as Athletics Officer, Platoon Commander, and Marine Platoon Sergeant. He currently has a cumulative GPA of 3.55. Midshipman Koons plans to be commissioned in May 2024. After his commissioning, he will serve as an intern in the Distribution and Logistics Department at Georgia Pacific before reporting to The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia, where he aspires to specialize as an Artillery Officer.

Midshipman Koons enjoys many outdoor activities such as hiking, playing sports, and general fitness related activities. Midshipman Koons is currently a Facilities Specialist at the Auburn Campus Recreational and Wellness Center. His biggest goal and focus now is to graduate from Auburn University and prepare for The Basic School.



**ECAC-MOAA High School JROTC Award Winners**



Auburn High School JROTC

Cadet Savannah Grace Trejo

Cadet Sergeant Major Savannah Trejo was born in Winfield, Alabama and moved to Auburn, Alabama when she was twelve years old. In middle school, she enjoyed horticulture and participating at her community theater where she played numerous roles in Macbeth. She is currently a junior at Auburn High School and is the C/SGM of her JROTC Battalion, in which she attended the JROTC State Leadership Conference and was selected as a finalist for Alabama JROTC State Officer. Additionally, she is part of the Track and Field team and a student Ambassador, where she travels to other schools to be a role model for Auburn High School. She enjoys challenging herself academically by pursuing AP classes and Honors classes, holding a 4.0 unweighted GPA and being a part of her school's chapter of the National Honor Society and Technical Honor Society. She is a part of Civil Air Patrol and JROTC PT Team and JLAB Team, who are competing at Nationals for the first time in Washington, D.C. this summer.

Cadet Trejo enjoys cycling and being outdoors, as well as playing guitar and reading books by U.S. Presidents. Her short-term goals include making all A's this semester, taking the Cadet Fitness Assessment, and getting accepted into the Health Science Internship and West Point SLE. Cadet Trejo's long-term goals are attending West Point, becoming an Active-Duty Security Intelligence Officer, and later becoming a special agent for the federal government.

Booker T. Washington High School JROTC

**Ja’Klya Pickens**

Cadet Ja’Klya Pickens is the daughter of Mr. Jmell Pickens Sr. and Ms. UKirah Boldin. Cadet Pickens is a veteran leader on the BTW Varsity Cheer team, a member of the Award winning JROTC Drill and Academic team, Student Government Association, BTW Golden Ambassadors, and Golden Voices. Cadet Pickens is also a participant of the Tuskegee University College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Science youth programs (specifically, 4-H and Jr. MANRS), and also of the 2024 Tuskegee Chapter Jack and Jill Cotillion. Cadet Pickens completed basic training for the Alabama National Guard during the summer of 2023. She is currently dually-enrolled as a student at Tuskegee University.

Cadet Ja’Kiya Pickens finds joy by engaging in activities such as reading, performing in oratorical contests, and writing poetry. Upon the culmination of her high school years, she intends to enroll at Tuskegee University where she has already been awarded a full scholarship. She intends to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing. As a member of the Alabama National Guard, she plans to join the TU ROTC program and advance as an officer in the United States military.

Her favorite quote is: "I would rather fail my way to success than to be a successful failure."

-Winston Churchill

**Smiths Station High School JROTC**

**Lawrence Grant**

Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Grant will have his biography sent in later.

Central High School JROTC

No Submission Yet

Thursday, March 21, 2024 page 5 The Auburn Villager

# Congress approves funds for air traffic control tower at Auburn U. Regional Airport

**Special to the Villager**

The United States Congress last week approved funding legislation that includes \$7.2 million for the construction of an air traffic control tower at the Auburn University Regional Airport.

This critical infrastructure will enhance safety measures and operational efficiency and alleviate air traffic congestion at the airport. The construction of an air traffic control tower represents a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to secure a controlled airport environment in the community.

The airport has experienced record levels of operations due to the high number of flight training students at Auburn University and the continued increase in business, military and recreational travelers to the Auburn-Opelika area. The airport experienced a record number of operations in 2023, second only to Birmingham International Airport in the state of Alabama. The completion of the control tower will provide oversight of air traffic and facilitate a safer airspace.

U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers was instrumental in securing these funds in legislation that was signed into law on March 9, according to members of the Airport Advisory Board.

Bill Hutto, executive director of the Auburn University Regional Airport, said the funding will have an immense impact on the airport and the area.

"This project will significantly increase safety at the airport, which is the top priority," Hutto said. "It also will make the airport more efficient for our many users, ranging from education to economic development. We thank Congressman Rogers for his continued support of aviation initiatives in our community."

Opelika Mayor Gary Fuller, who serves as chairman of the Airport Advisory Board, agreed. "The construction of the air traffic control tower marks a transformative moment for the airport," Fuller said. "This investment underscores our commitment to ensure our community is served with the utmost safety. We are grateful for the support of Congressman Rogers and look forward to the positive impact this project will have on our region's aviation capabilities."

Construction of the air traffic control tower is expected to begin later this year, and completion is expected within two years.

Auburn University Regional Airport remains dedicated to fostering the highest levels of safety, and this significant investment will enhance its commitment to that endeavor, said the university in a news release.

## Learn CPR

Headquartered in the Opelika/ Auburn area, [Care Point Resources](#) delivers top-tier American Heart Association instruction and resuscitation equipment to workplace, home and community. They are on a mission to increase the survival rate from Sudden Cardiac Arrest, and you can be an integral part of that mission. Classes at Auburn Chamber of Commerce.

In Alabama, CPR classes from the [American Red Cross](#) can help you become a more capable, confident, and helpful spouse, partner, friend, neighbor, co-worker and citizen. By learning this life-saving measure, you can provide care when it's needed most. In order to allow everyone the opportunity to train – regardless of schedule or learning style – we offer CPR certification classes in three formats: in-person, online, and via a blended Simulation Learning class that combines online coursework with an in-person skills session. Go on-line to register for a class in Opelika.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**The city of Auburn has partnered with Fort Moore and the U.S. Army Transition Assistance Program to help veterans connect with local companies**

# Workforce Development launches veteran career assistance program

## Special to the Villager

The City of Auburn's Workforce Development team has launched the Career Skills Program, a new initiative designed to connect job-seeking veterans with local companies.

A partnership with Fort Moore and the U.S. Army Transition Assistance Program, the program helps veterans who are retiring or leaving the military transition back to civilian life by connecting them with internships and careers with Auburn industries.

"This program is a win-win for all involved — our local companies are looking for great employees, and veterans, particularly coming out of Fort Moore, are often looking to stay in the area and begin a new career," said

Workforce Development Director Amy Brabham. "By simply connecting them, we help bridge the gap and meet the needs of veterans and our industry base."

Army veteran Tony Dein is the first to go through Auburn's Career Skills Program. Dein spent more than 25 years in the Army gaining experience in training and development, operational leadership and project management. In February, he began an internship with 2AUSA, LLC, a die-casting company that serves as a Tier 1 supplier to major automobile and heavy truck manufacturers.

Those interested in participating in or learning more about the program may contact Trevor Cook with the city's Workforce Development team at 334-501-7303 or [tcook@auburnalabama.org](mailto:tcook@auburnalabama.org).

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# Dave Moore's Info on Medical Issues for Teresa

- Humana Healthcare Access
  - ◊ Teresa saved every password on her computer/ phone.
  - ◊ **Could not have made many decisions unless I was able to access through her logins, acting as her.**
- Tricare Preparation
  - ◊ Appointment of representative and authorization to disclose information.
  - ◊ Authorization to release information (General)
  - ◊ Sensitive diagnosis only: Authorization to release information.
- EAMC
  - ◊ ICU team was great. Highest nurse-to-patient ratio.
  - ◊ Good, caring teams
  - ◊ Step down levels much more challenging. Much lower nurse-to-patient ratio.
  - ◊ Had to stay on top of them more or do more myself.
  - ◊ Could get neglected during the night shift.
  - ◊ Caring varied. Good nurses, not so good nurses. Just generally stretched too thin
- Skilled Nursing Care
  - ◊ No local skilled nursing facilities in Auburn take TriCare as primary insurance.
  - ◊ Arbor Springs as a SNF/rehab facility is full with long backup.
  - ◊ SNF within EAMC medical center. Again, does not take TriCare.
  - ◊ Probably best option in Columbus, GA.
- Request a Case Manager
  - ◊ The case manager was my advocate “inside the wire” of Tricare.
  - ◊ She helped create time and space for me, helped restore benefits when Tricare wanted to cut me off.
- Aftermath
  - ◊ Have Access to each other’s logins! computer and phone (two-factor authentications)
  - ◊ Ensure someone else has access or can gain access immediately.
  - ◊ Take the time to designate representatives.
  - ◊ Seek a case manager, make them say no.
  - ◊ Don’t let supplemental slip.
  - ◊ Pay attention to the explanation of benefits. I did not get a mailing of the most important one I’m appealing.
  - ◊ Don’t expect local long-term care or skilled nursing with TRICARE as the primary insurance-- long wait
  - ◊ Make sure all estate paperwork is in order.
  - ◊ Make sure at least two other people have access to all your financial sites.



Let someone (family member or friend) know your password to your phone!!!!

If you would like to receive the whole Power Point presentation that Dave Moore gave us at the March dinner meeting, please email Judy Bohler at [bohler1107@charter.net](mailto:bohler1107@charter.net) to have it emailed to you. The presentation also has receipts of invoices and bills, and there may be more in the future. He also sent a directive for physicians and family example and medical power of attorney example which he is updating with his daughters. In the email let Judy know if you want these two items as well. Thank you, Dave, for showing us the challenges with the healthcare system and with modern communication devices.

## 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.

|                           |                 |                            |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
|                           |                 | <b>Chair Positions</b>     |                 |
| President:                | Mike Horsefield | Surviving Spouses Liaison: | Kathy Barto     |
| Vice President:           | Chris Richie    | Monthly Meeting:           | Judy Bohler     |
| Secretary:                | BJ DeBardeleben | Guest Speakers:            | Chris Richie    |
| Treasurer:                | Gordon Bugg     | By-Laws:                   | BJ DeBardeleben |
| Director Chapter Affairs: | Ron Carson      | State Council:             | Ron Barto       |
| Director Communication:   | Jeff Bohler     | Legislative Updates:       | Ron Barto       |
| Director Banquet:         | Judy Bohler     | MOAA News:                 | Ron Barto       |
| Director Legislative:     | Ron Barto       | Chaplain:                  | Mike Golden     |
| Past President:           | Mike Golden     |                            |                 |
|                           |                 | News Release:              | Ron Carson      |
|                           |                 | ROTC Awards:               | Jim Matthews    |



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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.**