

# AIKEN CHAPTER MOAA THE COURIER JUNE 2025



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All newsletters are sent by email

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT:

## Barbara McKnight, Capt, USAF



Summer is almost here! While May kept us busy, we're now gearing up for the fall elections.

On May 6th, four Senior ROTC cadets at USC Aiken were commissioned with a heartfelt send-off by Tom Tilghman. We continue to pledge our support for this essential program. The following day, May 7th, saw the JROTC dinner organized beautifully by Tom Tilghman and Lynda Mann. With over 100 attendees, including award recipients, parents, mentors, and instructors, the event was a success. Our members graciously covered the dinner costs for the recipients and their guests. Paul Howell, Senator Lindsey Graham's Constituent Services Aide for Veterans and Military Affairs, delivered an informative speech on applying to military service academies.

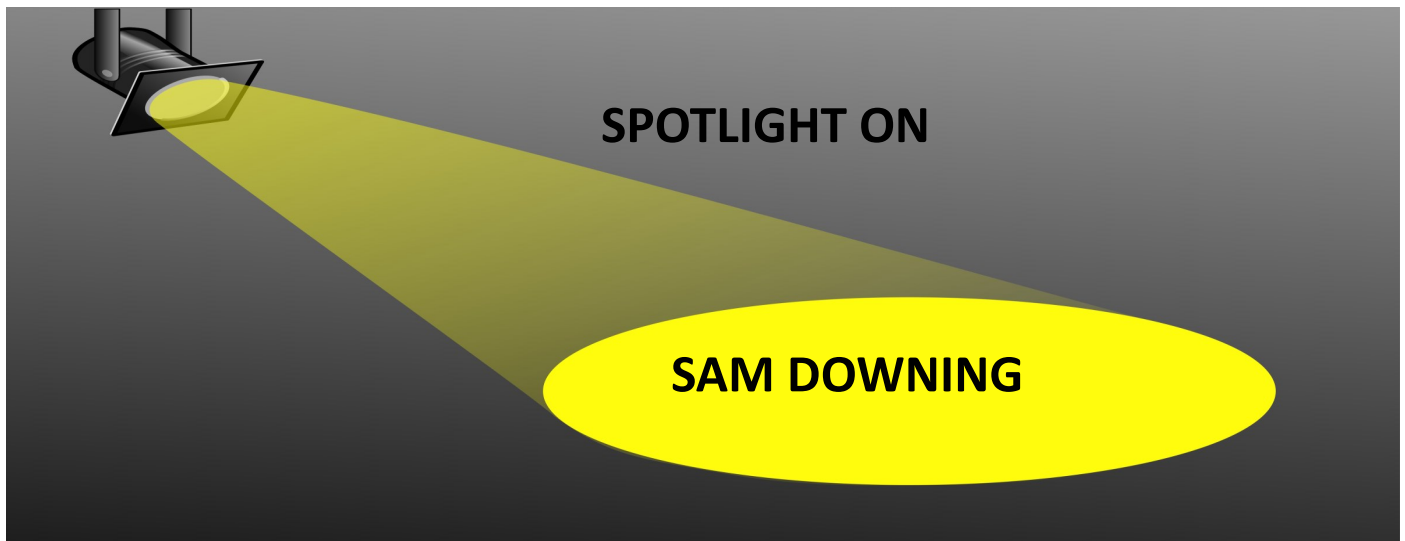
May also brings participation in "Our Community Salutes" at the USC Aiken convocation center, where around 30 young individuals from Aiken County will take The Oath of Enlistment.

Members are encouraged to join us at the reviewing stand during the May 24th Memorial Day Parade, honoring David Lobb as the Grand Marshall. We're excited about having a significant turnout from our membership.

Our June **guest speaker** for the evening will be **Harold Rice**, Administrative Officer, Cemetery and Budget Operations at the Fort Jackson National Cemetery. It should be an informative presentation.

We are actively seeking more members to join the Board next January. If you know potential candidates or are interested yourself, please reach out to Dick Dewar. The board will continue to meet a few times over the summer. If you have anything you would like to bring to the board please feel free to contact me or any member of the board. With **everyone's** involvement and leadership, our chapter will continue to flourish.

Because of family needs I will not be joining you at the June Meeting. I pray that you all have a wonderful summer with family and friends. Stay safe and I will see you at the September meeting for our kickoff to another great year!!



CPT Sam Downing was born and raised in Wyoming and Colorado and thoroughly enjoyed the outdoor sports and lifestyle for that region of the US. He received his regular Army commission through ROTC at the University of Wyoming. He served 5 years on active duty as a Ranger-Airborne-Infantry Officer, plus an additional 7 years in the Reserves.

During his active duty, he was stationed at Fort Benning, GA, in command positions at Illesheim Army Airbase in Germany and Vietnam, and with ACSI (Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence) as a briefing officer at the Pentagon. He served a majority of his tour in Vietnam in combat as a Rifle Company Commander with Charlie Company, 1/18<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. Charlie Company (also known as Dogface Charlie), had a noteworthy period of service before, during and after Downing's command time. The First Infantry Division Museum later published two books about the company's time in Vietnam. For his actions in Vietnam Sam received a Purple Heart, two Bronze Star Medals, and a Silver Star Medal.

He received his Bachelors in Business Administration from the University of Wyoming, and an MBA from the University of Denver after his active duty service. His post-service civilian career included almost 35 years in a mix of real estate finance, development, and construction, as well as renovation and management of several historic hotels. After retiring from those real estate activities, he served for 6 years in the Resolutions and Receiverships Division of the FDIC during the 2008-2016 financial/banking crisis.

Sam and his wife Jan retired (mostly) to Aiken in 2015, and have learned that retirement is almost a full-time job. They jointly have five children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



# JROTC Recognition



Pictured, in no particular order, are the Outstanding JROTC Students recognized at our May Meeting: Trishonna Dukes, Aiken; Caylee Lofton, Allendale-Fairfax; Jamarcus Coleman, Barnwell; Benjamin Hendrix, Batesburg-Leesville; Wyatt McDonald, Midland Valley; Makaylen Hansbrough, North Augusta; Sofia Odom, Silver Bluff; Athena Washburn, South Aiken; and Savannah Cushman, Wagener-Salley.

These young cadets are current Juniors and were chosen by their JROTC instructors to be honored for their outstanding service.

Thanks go out to Col Tom Tilghman for his continued commitment to spearheading this program as well as the many members who sponsored a table. Without our sponsors, providing this event “cost-free” to the cadets and their families would not be possible.

We thank Tom for his MANY years of service to this program and welcome COL Lynda Mann who will be taking over the project next year.





Happy Half Hour: 1800 hours

Pledge and Invocation: 1830 hours

Dinner Menu:

Preset Salad w/ Homemade dressing

Chef's choice Starch

Seasonal vegetables

Grilled Pork Loin w/Rosemary Red Wine Reduction

Preset Dessert

Coffee, tea, water

Full Cash Bar

Dress Code: Business Casual

Seating: Assigned

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS: FRIDAY, MAY 30 - Email  
lscaldwell@gmail.com or call (803) 226-0546 \$30/  
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