



The Standard Bearer
The North Shore & Chicago Chapter of
THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of
AMERICA

Newsletter

Vol. XXXV, No. 1 January-February 2024

March Program and Speaker



On March 17th, the Chapter meeting will be held at Dover Straits, 890 Highway 45 in Mundelein. The Friendship Hour begins at 12:30 p.m. and the program and luncheon are at 1:00 p.m. Our speaker and distinguished guest will be Dr. Robert G. Buckley, MD, Director of the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center. He will give us an update on the Lovell FCCC and address some of our questions.

Dr. Buckley oversees the delivery of health care to more than 80,000 Veterans, Service Members and Military Dependents annually, and is responsible for an operating budget of \$458M and a workforce of approximately 3,200 personnel. Lovell Federal Health Care Center's 353-bed hospital offers full medical-surgical care, geriatric and extended care, and a variety of mental health services, including residential programs. Lovell Federal Health Care Center also operates three community-based outpatient clinics, and four branch clinics serving active duty military, including more than 40,000 Navy recruits per year, on Naval Station Great Lakes.

Dr. Buckley was a career Navy Doctor with a distinguished record of service ending with his assignment as Commanding Officer/Deputy Director, Lovell FCCC from 2014 to 2016. He retired as a Captain in 2016 and entered the VA as Chief of Staff, Jesse Brown VAMC in Chicago. He has been the Director of the Lovell FCCC since October 2018.

From the President's Desk

It has been 20 years since I was the Chapter President and, obviously, there have been changes. Our membership count is down somewhat (not nearly as bad as many other organizations) but our geographic territory has more than tripled. The Chapter now includes all or part of 20 Illinois counties, nearly 75% of the state's population, and across all or part of 13 Congressional Districts.

Thanks to Col Gill and the previous board members, our chapter has increased our community outreach, particularly our relationship with the Midwest Veterans Closet and other community activities, and our interplay with fellow veterans' service organizations. The Chapter is strong. We are represented on the three county Veterans Assistance Commissions for which we are

eligible, and the Lovell FHCC Shareholders Advisory Council. We actively interact with several of our legislators, both national and state, but we need to expand that reach. With your help, we can solidify the MOAA presence among the ROTC/JROTC programs (to include those beyond Lake and Cook Counties), to reach more legislators, to identify other outreach opportunities, and to increase our participation with the MOAA national legislative priorities.

Please help and please join us at the March 17th meeting. Our speaker will be Dr. Buckley, the Director of the Lovell Federal Health Care Center.

LTC John DeReu, USA, (Ret.), President

Chapter News

New Members

The Chapter welcomes Captain Steven Kriss, USN, (Ret) and Renata Kriss to our group. The Kriss' reside in Highwood. We also welcome. LCDR James Hochstetler, USN, (Ret) and Laurel Hochstetler. The Hochstetlers live in Wonder Lake.

Chapter Board Member Honored by MOAA

The President of MOAA, Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, USAF, (Ret), has recently appointed Captain Jake Jablonski, MIANG, (Active) to MOAA's 2023-2025 Currently Serving Advisory Council. As an advisor to MOAA's national leadership, Captain Jablonski will discuss, deliberate, and recommend improvements on current and potential MOAA programs, plans and policies. Captain Jablonski currently serves as the Chapter's Membership Director.

VAC Cook County (VACC)

Our MOAA chapter is a member of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County (VACCC). The mission of VACCC is to provide immediate emergency financial Assistance to Cook County discharged Veterans and their families.

At our most recent meeting on December 26th, at the La Grange American Legion Hall, it was announced that VACCC will be receiving \$2 million to assist veterans. This was great news, since VACCC had a challenging year getting approvals and meeting deadlines.

The VACCC can help with rents, mortgages, utilities, food, burials, record requests, bus cards and referrals for jobs. In order to qualify, a veteran must bring a DD-214 and have had at least 6 months of active-duty service. A VA rating award (more information call 800.827.1000) and total household income verification, is required.

For more information, the VACCC office, 312.433.6010, is located at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. The VACCC continues to work on a robust web site, meanwhile try vacc@cookcountyl.gov.

**COL Roman Golash, USA, (Ret.) Chapter Representative
to Cook County VAC**

Fort Sheridan Cemetery Just Got Bigger

This is an update to an ongoing item of interest taken from the Lake County VAC newsletter.

“The transfer of 4.7 acres from the Lake County Forest Preserve to the National Cemetery Administration was completed in June of 2023 with the signing of SB1985 by Governor Pritzker. This was the government legislative part of the transfer. However, as Ken Jones pointed out: "While it's correct that the necessary legislation was passed and became law, the transaction has not yet closed. The Forest Preserve District and the VA are still working on the specific language of the Memorandum of Agreement, and are working diligently to complete the transfer. Realistically, I don't yet have a timeline for completion. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Ken Jones at: Land Preservation Manager Lake County Forest Preserves 847-968-3251 Cell 847-276-0114 1899 West Winchester Road, Libertyville, IL.”

Midwest Veterans' Closet Update

The Midwest Veterans' Closet (MVC) remains a vibrant and growing source of support for veterans and active-duty service members in northern Illinois.

Ms Mary Carmody, MVC Director, recently reported that in 2023 that the MVC provided a total of 884,711 lbs. of food to veterans and service members in need. The food is acquired through donations left at the facility, food purchased from the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and the Meal Connect Program where excess food is picked up at retail locations by the MVC. The amount of food provided for 2023 is a new record.

The MVC also recently received a building permit to begin work on their new facility on Green Bay Road – a few miles north of their current location. Some initial construction preparation has started at the site.

As you may know, the Chapter prides itself in supporting the MVC through volunteerism and material support. All Chapter members are encouraged to chip in by offering time and money. Your support can be arranged by calling the MVC at 847-354-2108 or visiting the MVC at 2323 Green Bay Road, North Chicago, IL.

Mark Your Calendars

There is still time to join Chapter members for breakfast on February 13th at 9:30 a.m. at Butterhills Cafe, 4195 Dundee Road in Northbrook. Please let Ken Johnson, at kennethjohnson033@gmail.com know if you would like to join the group. There is no agenda, just a great opportunity to meet and talk with fellow members and spouses. Our April meeting will be on the 12th and in May we will meet on the 19th and hear from the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Dover Strait

890 Highway 45

Mundelein, IL

Sunday, March 17th, 2024

**Chapter Luncheon Meeting with Dr. Robert G. Buckley, MD,
USN (Ret), Director, Lovell FCCC, Guest Speaker**

12: 30 pm - Friendship Hour - 1:00 pm – Luncheon - 2:00 p.m. - Program

Please Note: Business Casual dress is requested. Payment at the door is discouraged. Please pay in advance.

.....
● **RESERVATION REQUEST (Deadline is March 14)** ●

TO: CW2 Eliseo Lopez, 26533 N. Wilton Road, Wauconda, IL 60084-2430

Phone: 847-452-2414 email: elopez1989@yahoo.com

FROM:

NAME _____ RANK/SVC _____

GUEST/SPOUSE _____

Please reserve ____ places at the MOAA meeting on **Sunday, March 17th** at Dover Straits @ \$35.00 per person.

____ This will be my first attendance at a meeting of this Chapter.

____ I will need a ride to the meeting. ____ I would be happy to drive someone.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ payable to *North Shore and Chicago Chapter MOAA*