



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

Newsletter

Vol. XXXIV, No. 2 February/March 2023

Speaker and Program for March 19th



Join us at the MOAA Luncheon Meeting of the North Shore & Chicago Chapter as we welcome Mr. Mitch Siegal from Catholic Charities in Waukegan.

Mitch Siegal spent most of his career in the experiential marketing industry (trade show exhibits, events, museum exhibits, etc.) as a sales and marketing executive. As a student of markets, customer experience and messaging Mitch took this knowledge to the Waukegan Public Library and helped to create their first Marketing and Exhibit Department. It also made him aware of the many needs of the residents of Waukegan and Lake County. He currently works as an employment counselor and job developer for Catholic Charities Lake County Veterans Employment Program. Helping veterans and their family members find meaningful employment.

Catholic Charities is a valued community partner at the James A. Lovell Federal Healthcare Center. Mitch counsels residents at the Homeless Veterans Residential Program, the Homeless Veterans Walk-in Center, Transitional Residential Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit. He works with VA and other community partners such as IDES, the Lake County Workforce Development Center and Veterans Path to Hope to help veterans find employment.

He founded the Catholic Charities Lake County Veterans Bike Project and the Catholic Charities Lake County Veterans Computer Project to provide free bikes and computers to help veterans in their job search.

Mitch is a member of the James A. Lovell Federal Healthcare Center Stakeholders Advisory Council, a Co-Chair of the Veterans Community Partnership Network, and is a volunteer as a reading-readiness tutor to middle school and high school students through the Waukegan to College Program. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army Medical Corps.

The luncheon meeting will be held at Dover Straits, 890 East Route 45, Mundelein, IL. The luncheon begins with a social hour at 12:30 p.m.

From the President's Desk

COL Peck will provide a detailed Legislative Report below. In addition to that, it is important to have in mind the primary national advocacy focus of MOAA for 2023. First, a key priority is to get the new Congress to vote on and pass the Major Richard Star Act. At the end of the last session, two-thirds of Congress supported it. It is understood that a decision to vote on this bill is determined by the Speaker of the House.

The other MOAA priorities are:

Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits...ensure pay at or above Employment Cost Index

Military Housing...an estimated 75% of military families are paying out of pocket \$200/month

Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees...reverse cuts to pharmacy benefits, and more

Health Care and Benefits for Veterans...surviving spouses and families support

Service Families...spouses struggle with employment (22-24% unemployment rate)

Survivors... Improve SGLI/VGLI to match inflation

Guard and Reserve...overcome the lack of TRICARE coverage for Reserve components

Congressional matters such as the U.S. debt ceiling (now \$31.4 Trillion) could affect both active duty and veteran benefits. Yet there is more to this matter. It behooves all MOAA members to urge Congress to commit its full attention to strengthening and sustaining the All-Voluntary armed forces. If pay and benefits are adversely impacted by debt ceiling deliberations, it is certainly logical that it can impact recruiting and retention...and veterans.

CW2 Lee Lopez is lining up an excellent group of speakers for our luncheon meetings starting March 19th. Included are speakers addressing veteran employment efforts, the history of the establishment of the Naval Station Great Lakes and the Bears Football Team. We can look forward to an exciting spring!

Col. George K. Gill, USMC (Ret.), President

Chapter News

Directory Cutoff: Please get your 2023 membership dues into Capt. Jake Jablonski before March 31st to be included in the 2023 Membership Directory. **This applies only to those members on a one-year membership.** Jake is at jjablonski2016@gmail.com.

Lifetime Chapter Membership: Upon your next Chapter membership renewal, you will have the option of renewing membership for one year, three years or for your lifetime. The lifetime membership has been added by the Board and will cost \$100.

Scholarship Award Help Needed: The Chapter awards three \$250 scholarships to ROTC cadets at area colleges. We are asking our Chapter members to attend a ceremony and make the Chapter award to the winning cadet. Our first need is for a member to attend the ceremony at Northwestern University on April 26th. We also award scholarships at Loyola University and at ITT. Please contact Chapter Vice-President MAJ Carter Bell at carterbell@comcast.net and volunteer to help with this important project.

Speaking of volunteering, the Chapter urges its members to get up, out and help. Consider the Midwest Veterans' Closet (contact Elke Friedman), the Northern Illinois Food Bank (contact Allan Ayers), or pick a veteran-related charity and let them know you are from MOAA.

Legislative Report

The Chapter has been active in many legislative issues here in Illinois in 2022. For 2023, the three that appear most important are spelled out below.

First on our list is the transfer of the 4.7 acres from the Lake County Forest Preserve District to the VA and to become an expanded Fort Sheridan National Cemetery.

Second, is the definition of a veterans' service organization in the Military Veterans Assistance Act. We stand by the definition currently provided by Congress in our congressional charter. Please if you would like more details on the problem here, please contact me or Superintendent Andrew Tangen of the Lake County Veterans' Assistance Commission,

Third, we support Rep. Mason's bill on the Veterans Bill of Rights. Our goal is to make Illinois number one in as a veterans' friendly state. Currently, according to AARP, we stand number three. I see no reason why we can't do it to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families. Plus, we need to look at how we can utilize the veterans' assistance commissions in caring for the families of the mobilized guardsmen and reservists.

It is also worth noting that for the 103d General Assembly now getting underway and that the Chair of House Veterans' Affairs Committee is 76th District Representative Lance Yednock of Ottawa. The Chair of the Senate's Veterans' Affairs Committee is Sen. Julie Morrison of Highwood.

COL Michael Peck, USA (Ret.), Director of Legislation

Mark Your Calendars

Our April 16 meeting will be at Dover Straits, and we will welcome Ms. Tricia Menke, Curator of Education at the National Museum of the American Sailor (located at Great Lakes). On May 23, we will be part of a combined luncheon meeting with the AUSA, VFW, MOWW, MOAA and ROA and be visited Mr. Sean Magee, Chief of Staff of the Chicago Bears. Please note that the social hour for this meeting will be at noon – the same time that Bears home games start.



Dover Straits

890 E. Route 45, Mundelein

Sunday, March 19, 2023

Speaker: Mr. Mitch Siegel

Topic: Catholic Charities Lake County Veterans' Employment Program

Entrees from a Special Menu, plus soup, salad and dessert

• 1230 Friendship Hour - 1300 Luncheon - 1400 Program •

.....
• RESERVATION REQUEST (Deadline is March 16, 2023) •

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 19th**, at Dover Straits, Mundelein @ \$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*