

The Standard Bearer – Chapter Newsletter

November 2025

Our Program for November 16

Our next luncheon/meeting will be on November 16th at Dover Straits, 890 East, Rte. 45 in Mundelein. Our guest speaker will be Mr. John Murray, Assistant Superintendent, Lake County Veterans' Assistance Commission.



John is a native of Long Island, New York and has served on the Veterans Assistance Commission since September 2018. He served on active duty in the US Navy for just over 20 years, beginning in 1994, eventually serving at six different duty stations around the world. His most recent tours include Senior Enlisted Medical Advisor at the Naval Special Operations Medical Institute, the Senior Medical Department Representative of C Company, and the leading Chief Petty Officer in D Company, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion. He served in multiple roles while at 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion as Special Amphibious Reconnaissance Corpsman (SARC). He deployed twice in

support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Fallujah, Iraq and twice in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Master Chief Murray's many military awards include the Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation (three awards, one with valor) and many others. He is triple warfare qualified as a Fleet Marine Force, Surface and Aviation Warfare Specialist. He was also a Navy Deep Sea Diving Medical Technician, US Marine Corps Combat Diver, MK-25 Dive Supervisor, and Naval Parachutist.

Murray earned an associate degree in general studies, graduated from the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy and many other military organizational leadership schools. He has finished two marathons and multiple endurance races.

John will speak to us about his involvement and experience in the operations of the Lake County VAC.

From the President's Desk

At our October luncheon, MOAA staffer Dena Kilgore presented an overview of our organization-numbers, demographics, trends and goals. Afterwards, Dena, Council President Col. Bob Tyler and I discussed some of our concerns and thoughts on the future. One new item we injected was

the possibility that the former Northern Illinois Chapter (Rockford area) may be either restarted or restarted as a satellite of our chapter. COL (Ret) David Draeger is leading the effort to make that happen.

As you will note in the proposed slate of 2026-27 officers, Col. (Ret) James Kott responded to our need for a Chapter Secretary (hoorah). The proposed slate will be presented at our November meeting, the floor opened for other nominations, then a vote taken. The new board will be installed at the December luncheon.

Also, COL Matt Garrison volunteered to be our primary delegate to the Cook County VAC. This is an important development for the Chapter and for Cook county veterans.

The Near Time Report (NTR) from MOAA, available to the Chapter President and Membership Director, lists new national members or those who have moved into our area. There were 10 names in the last three month report, six of which are active duty, which could indicate a positive trend toward younger members. All are being contacted.

Once again, I ask you to utilize the “Legislative Action Center”, a drop-down item under “Advocacy” on the MOAA.org home page. It is easy to use. The prepared letters cover issues of concern to us all. The volume of our letters is part of MOAA’s strength on the hill.

LTC John Dereu, USA (Ret.), President

Chapter News

Nominees for 2026-2027 Chapter Board of Directors

The Board of Directors operates under Section VIII of the Chapter By-Laws. The nominees for 2026-2027 are:

President, COL Matthew D. Garrison, USA, Active
Vice-President, CW5 Alfred Saller, USA (Ret.)
Secretary, Col. James F. Kott, USAF (Ret.)
Treasurer, Lt. Col. James E. Haley, ILANG (Ret.)
Director of Legislative Affairs (State), MAJ Dean Farr, USA (Ret.)
Director of Legislative Affairs (National), LTC John DeReu, USA (Ret.)
Director of Membership – Capt. Jacob P. Jablonski, MIANG, Active
Director of Programs - CW2 Eliseo T. Lopez, USA (Ret.)
Director of Publications – LTC Kenneth L. Johnson, USA (Ret.)
Director of Legal Affairs – Capt. Howard M. Lang, USN (Ret.)

These officers will be nominated at our November Meeting. Voting will take place at the November meeting. Installation is at the December meeting.

Other members of the Board will be the Corresponding Secretary and the Midwest Veterans’ Closet Liaison and Surviving Spouse Liaison Officer, both who are appointed by the President and the Past President.

Service Academy Career Conference

Several members of the Chapter are scheduled to operate a North Shore and Chicago Chapter booth at the Service Academy Career Conference (SACC). The SACC is held annually and exclusively for service academy graduates.

MOAA National will be present at the Chicago SACC from November 19 – 20 and has agreed having the North Shore and Chicago Chapter support. National has asked that we provide two- or three-chapter members who have transitioned recently and can speak to MOAA's efforts at both the local and national levels. From the Membership side, this is a game changing recruiting opportunity in that we will be able to recruit for the Chapter.

Planning continues and your help may be needed.

Capt. Jacob P. Jablonski, Membership Director, MIANG, Active

Legislative Report

In commemoration of Veterans Day, on behalf of our chapter I sent short letters to the Governor and McHenry County board. The intent was to express our thanks as well as raising the flag with key policy types. It's important to maintain these relationships particularly now as funding is becoming more difficult. Michael Iwanicki, Director, McHenry County VAC thanked me. Terry Prince, Director of Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, thanked me as well.

The 2026 Illinois General Assembly will be convened in three months so a busy legislative session will be reported on as it develops.

MAJ Dean Farr, USA (Ret.), Director of Legislation

Mark Your Calendars

Our 14 December meeting will be held at Dover Straits. It will be our holiday meeting, and we will have the Heavenly Harps with us. Please keep in mind that there will be no Chapter luncheon meetings in January or February. But an informal Chapter breakfast will be held on Wednesday, January 28th.



Dover Straits

890 E. Route 45, Mundelein

Sunday, November 16, 2025

Speaker: Mr. John Murray

Topic: Activities of the Lake County VAC

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

● ***1230 Friendship Hour - 1300 Luncheon - 1400 Program***●

Business Casual Dress Requested

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● **RESERVATION REQUEST (Deadline is November 13)** ●

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, November 16th** 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*