



Olympia Area Chapter

In this
month's
Bugle



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THE BUGLE

Presidents Note

Greetings and Happy New Year to all! We had over 30 members turn out for our December Holiday luncheon and Officer and Board Member Installation at Panorama's seventeen51 restaurant. Chapter Secretary and Past President Ro Marcus officiated the officer and new board member swearing-in and following lunch, we were entertained by Latitude 47, a professional musical combo who not only played traditional Christmas and Holiday music, but also hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. They played for just under an hour and, by the smiles and reactions of those present, were well received.

As we move into 2026, it is important for you, as a chapter member, to be active in the MOAA Legislative Action Center as chapter member participation will become a scored Chapter of Excellence evaluation activity. Also, look for the change to MOAA's privacy policy requiring members to opt-out verses opt-in to activate receipt of Chapter and Council emails.

At our November meeting, we passed out several letters from Shelton HS NJROTC Cadets asking for our support of their program. Treasurer, Bill Moseley passed these out to members who wished to volunteer and support a cadet. At our December meeting, I did not have an update and will reach out to the Shelton NJROTC to get an update for our January meeting. To those who took a letter and donated, thank you for your generosity.

And for those following Santa's Castle, their toy distribution is over and this year they served over 1000 more kiddos than last year. The final numbers are not in, but it looks like close to 5000 kiddos served and over \$1 million in toys, experiences, and food gift cards were dispensed. Again, many thanks to all who contributed to our sports ball collection and also those who made donations.



**FIVE STAR
AWARD WINNING
NEWSLETTER**
for the members
and friends of
Olympia Area
Chapter (WA 04) of
the Military Officers
Association of
America, a 501(c)(3)
organization.

P.O. Box 5957,
Lacey, Washington
98509-5957



Issue 01 -2026



**15 CONSECUTIVE YEARS
FIVE STAR LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE CHAPTER**

Due to our monthly meeting being a week earlier than normal, our December board meeting was cancelled. Our next board meeting is January 14 at 5:30 PM via TEAMS and our next chapter meeting is Wednesday, January 21, social @ 11:30 AM, meeting called to order at 12:00. The location is Panorama's seventeen51 restaurant and bistro. For our guest speaker, I am working to get Thurston County Sheriff Derek Sanders who is one of the youngest elected sheriffs in the country.

Last year was a fast year for our chapter and once again, for our size, we did a lot to help improve our community. As your outgoing President, I thank you for your support as we truly made a difference in the lives of many, from our scholarship recipients, to those living in the Shelton Veterans Village, to those helped by the USO, Fischer House, and Santa's Castle and more. We can proudly state, "we never stopped serving." Happy New Year to all!

Dave "Slots" Slotwinski

Editorial Policy: The Olympia Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and national MOAA provide their advocacy in a nonpartisan manner. Any inference of partisanship is unintended. The Olympia Area MOAA chapter is not liable or responsible for the content found in the links to other websites

2026 OFFICERS

President:
Carrie Nielson
CAPT, USN, Ret

1stVP (Programs):
Dave Slotwinski
COL, USA, Ret

2nd VP (Membership):
DeFrance Clarke
LtCol, USAF, Ret

Secretary:
Roselyn "Ro" Marcus CPT, USA, Fmr
SSP, Surviving Spouse Liaison

Treasurer:
William "Bill" Moseley
Col, USAF, Ret

2026 BOARD MEMBERS

Allen Acosta,
Maj, USA, Ret

Sam Cagle
Col, USAF, Ret

Marc Cote
COL, USA, Ret

Christine McManus,
CDR, USN, Ret
Communications Director

Danielle Nuxoll
Spouse, USA

Ray Rasmussen
COL, USA, Ret

Douglas White
LtCol, USAF, Ret
Chaplain

Treasurer's Report

Checking account balance:	\$6,034.40
Savings account balance:	\$3,655.94
Total:	\$9,690.34

Note from the Treasurer: The MOAA Olympia CashApp account was no longer functional, so the Treasurer worked with national MOAA to establish a Cheddar Up account to accommodate electronic payments. It has features that include paying dues, making donations, and making meal reservations. It is linked from the website at the Dues and Donations page. The QR code for our Cheddar Up account is:



Above: Carrie Nielson and Bill Moseley present check to USO center manager David Dutcher

Charity	Balance as of 12/31/25	Disbursed YTD	2025 Goal
USO	\$150.00	\$1,394.00	\$1400
Fisher House	\$150.00	\$1,150.00	\$1200
Santa's Castle	\$150.00	\$1,700.00	\$2000
Scholarships	\$1,157.00	\$4,000.00	\$3000
JROTC Booster Club	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500
Sports Balls	\$5.42	\$1,146.12	1000 balls
TOTALS	\$1,612.42	\$9,890.12 including 847 balls	\$8100 and 1000 balls

OLYMPIA MOAA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Several years ago, we decided to develop a scholarship program that has been successful in awarding four or five \$1000 scholarships each year. This year, our minimum goal is again \$3000. We allow donations into the scholarship fund throughout the year, then make it our primary focus for donations December through February. With this approach, we anticipate meeting or exceeding the goal again in 2026. For the 2026 Scholarship season, the board voted to limit eligibility to all the members of the Shelton and New Market NJROTC programs. The instructors will provide the students with eligibility and application guidelines and we will conduct the program as in previous years, just with a smaller pool of candidates.

We launched our program at the beginning of the school year and will award the scholarships in the May-June timeframe.

Now that Christmas is over, let's shift our charity focus towards building the scholarship fund for 2026!

Santa's Castle

The mission of Santa's Castle is to ease holiday stress by providing new toys, board games and books to military families in the Pacific Northwest who are experiencing financial hardships. While the final numbers are still out, it looks like close to 5000 kiddos served and over \$1 million in toys, experiences, and food gift cards were dispensed this season to make Christmas brighter for our Service Members and their families. The need is just overwhelming given the current cost of living in western Washington.



The castle is very grateful for the deep generosity of the Olympia Area MOAA Chapter and our many colleagues who donated \$1,700 and 847 sports balls this year. Thank you all for your continuing generosity.

Check MOAA's Legislative Action Center for Latest Updates and To Take Action

– From the MOAA National Website

Recommend members visit the Legislative Action Center regularly to remain appraised of the current legislative priorities. As I prepare this month's newsletter, the priorities include Promoting the Major Richard Star Act Amendment to fix an unjust pay offset that penalizes veterans forced to medically retire due to combat injuries; and Stopping the 34-year wait – deliver toxic-exposed veterans the care they've earned. Millions of veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service are forced to wait decades – more than 34 years, on average – before they can access VA care and benefits for service-connected illnesses. Congress must pass legislation to bolster the legal framework for creating presumptive conditions, ensuring toxic-exposed veterans receive timely care. If you visit the Action Center, you can click on a button to write your legislators in support of these measures.

You can always use the Legislative Action Center to send messages directly to your elected officials.

For Surviving Spouses

– From the MOAA National Website

The Surviving Spouse Section of the MOAA Website publishes periodic articles with valuable information and contains an archive of all the past articles they have published, all under the title "Surviving Spouse Corner". Titles of articles include: Making a VA Benefits Compensation Claim, Protect Your Health and Wealth, Writing Your Legacy, and Resources for Caregivers. Just go to the national MOAA website and search for Surviving Spouse Corner.

CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Want to get in contact with your State or Federal Congressional Delegation? Here's the contact information of the Olympia Area representatives:

Senator Maria Cantwell (253)572-2281 950 Pacific Ave Suite 615 Tacoma, WA 98402 https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/contact/email	Senator Patty Murray (360)205-2878 771 Capitol Way S, Suite 502 Olympia, WA 98501 https://www.murray.senate.gov/write-to-patty/
Marilyn Strickland (360)459-8514 420 College St SE, Suite 3000 Lacey, WA 98503 https://strickland.house.gov/contact/	Jessica Bateman, Senator, District 22 (360)786-7642 409 Legislative Bldg PO Box 40422 Olympia, WA 98504
Beth Doglio, Representative (360)786-7940 308 John L O'Brien Bldg PO Box 40600 Olympia, WA 98504	Lisa Parshley (360)786-7992 317 John L O'Brien Bldg PO Box 40600 Olympia, WA 98504

To find other Federal Members of Congress by location you can go to:

<https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

To find other Washington State Members of Legislature by location you can go to:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

This site can also be used to look up information about bills under consideration in WA State.

Membership Notes

<p>If you are serving or have served as an officer in any branch of U.S. service, and are not yet a member of the Olympia Area MOAA Chapter and would like to join, and/or if you are not currently a member of national MOAA and would like to join, just go to our chapter website (https://olympiamoaa.org/join-us/) and fill out the convenient online Application form and you will be contacted by our membership chairperson. The first year of membership is free, so what are you waiting for?</p>	<p>Have you been thinking about upgrading your national MOAA membership from basic to premium, or even life membership? This would really help support MOAA's mission and give you access to many more MOAA resources and services from transition support to financial counseling, travel discounts to resource webinars. If you call 1- and mention the code "grassroots", you can receive a 10% discount.</p>
<p>If you are not currently on and wish to be added to the distribution list for this newsletter, contact the Communications Director or their Assistant (listed on the Officers and Board Members banner) and they will happily add you to their list. Distribution is primarily via email with a small number of members still receiving newsletters via snail mail.</p>	<p>Dual Military Couples - If both members of married couple are military officers and they would both like to be life members of MOAA, national MOAA says the second lifetime membership will only cost \$100 – what a great package deal!</p>

Excellent December Meeting

For our December meeting we had a special plated meal at Panorama for lunch. Secretary and Past President Roselyn Marcus inducted our newly elected officers and board members. After dinner everyone enjoyed the music of Latitude 47.



Left: Slots introducing the entertainment. Right: Latitude 47 setting up. Photos by Carrie Nielson.

Did You Know?

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has a Veterans Pension program that provides monthly payments to wartime Veterans who meet certain age and disability requirements, and who have income and net worth within certain limits. To find out if you are or a veteran you know is eligible, visit:

<https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility/>

Final Memorial Note as We Exit From 2025 into 2026

At the November meeting we held a 2-Bell Ceremony honoring those members we had lost since the previous ceremony (or had not previously honored). We honor:

Roger Englar, Air Force, Lt Col
Charles Martin, Army, LTC
Lawrence Sparks, Air Force, Col
Barbara Lind, Army, spouse
Carole Ressler, Navy, spouse
Judy Ann Jones, Navy, spouse
James McElroy, Army, MGen

Long-Time Chapter Members Have Moved

Ralph and Sue Chappell have recently moved from Lacey to Gig Harbor. They are unfortunately moving away from one son and his family, however the move puts them closer to their other two children and their families who live in Gig Harbor. Although they will be attending chapter meetings less frequently, they will maintain their Olympia Area Chapter membership and come to visit from time to time. Their new contact information is:

5325 W Old Stump Drive NW

Gig Harbor, WA 98332

Ralph: (C)

Sue: (C)

Uncasing Ceremony

On 06 November, at 1100, at the ARNG Readiness Center, JBLM, representatives of the Olympia Area MOAA Chapter were honored to attend the 3d Ordnance Battalion's Uncasing Ceremony to mark the return of their deployed members.



Above: Uncasing of the Colors featuring LTC Hare and CSM Haar of the 3rd EOD. Photos by Carrie Nielson.

Bylaw Changes Approved at November Chapter Meeting

At the November Chapter Meeting, the chapter members approved the following bylaws changes recommended by the Olympia Area Chapter Board of Directors. **To see the full text of the bylaws with recommended changes, go to the chapter website. In addition to grammatical, clarification, updating language, and other non-substantive changes, the following substantive changes were approved:

- Article III, Section 6. Records Management. Changes the current requirement that all documents be maintained for 6 years to a requirement that records shall be maintained in accordance with the chapter's records management policy, which is currently being finalized. This policy will require all financial records to be maintained for 7 years, will maintain historical records permanently, and allow transient records to be destroyed in 6 years or less. The policy will be provided to all chapter members once approved by the board.
- Article IV, Membership.
 - Section 1.(a). - Added Space Force to list of services.
 - Section 4.(A) d. - removed confusing language related to verification of membership applications.
 - Section 4.(B) - clarified that recommendations for honorary membership can be submitted by the board directors and officers, as well as chapter members.
- Article VIII, Board of Directors
 - Section 2(a). Changed when directors take office from next regular board meeting to the first board meeting in January, establishing the term as a one calendar year term.
 - Section 2(b). Added the ability for a vacant position on the board to be filled by election of a member at the next annual meeting, to serve to the remaining period of the term. This is in addition to the current ability of the board to appoint a member to a vacant position.
 - Section 5. Made it clear that board meetings can be held in person, by electronic means or a combination of both.
 - Section 9. Made it clear that voting by the board may occur by email, in accordance with chapter policy. The board will develop and approve a voting policy that provides the process for voting by email.
- Article IX, Officers
 - Section 2. Changed when officers take office from next regular board meeting to the first board meeting in January. Establishing calendar year terms.
 - Section 7. Clarified the Secretary's duties to include the maintenance of records in accordance with the records management policy.
- Article X, Committees.
 - Section 2. Simplified the committee structure to conform with current practice to provide greater flexibility by removing all the named committees with their attendant duties and replacing with the board establishing the process for creating committees by establishing a committee policy and listing some requirements that must be in the policy.
 - Section 4. Clarified the appointment of liaisons and removed the list of organizations for which liaisons are currently appointed, to provide greater flexibility and remove the need to amend the bylaws when organizations change.

Approved 2026 Officers and Board Members

The following slate of Officers and Board Members were elected at the November meeting, sworn in at the December meeting and are in office effective January 2026:

President	Carrie Nielson	Board of Directors	
1st Vice President	Dave Slotwinski	Elected	Doug White
2nd Vice President	DeFrance Clarke		Allen Acosta
Secretary	Roselyn Marcus		Danielle Nuxoll
Past President	Dave Slotwinski		Marc Cote
Bugle Editor/Website	Carrie Nielson/Chris McManus		Ray Rasmussen
Treasurer	William Moseley	Continuing	Sam Cagle
			Chris McManus

Their names and contact information will now be in the page two banner and they will be your main contacts should you ever have questions about chapter activities.

Member of the Month:

LT John McConnel, USN, FMR

Submitted by CAPT Carrie Nielson



John McConnel is a lifetime member of MOAA, and has been a member of the Olympia Area MOAA chapter for a long time now. He lives in Lacey with his wife Susan. Along with MOAA, he is an active member of MOWW and an active supporter of JROTC and Northwest Youth Leadership Conference.

Where are you from? John was raised in Beaver Falls, PA. He graduated from Davis and Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia, with a BS in Management Administration.

Branch of Service? John served in the Navy from January of 1961 through December of 1964. He was commissioned through NAS Pensacola as a Naval Aviation Officer. After additional training in Glenco, GA, for CIC, he was assigned to VAW 11

in San Diego. VAW-11 was the Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron, nicknamed the “Early Elevens”, an airborne early warning squadron, whose mission was to provide services to fleet forces and shore warning networks, under all weather conditions. The squadron was also responsible for combat air patrol and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) missions. It was based at NAS North Island but had detachments serving aboard 13 attack carriers and antisubmarine carriers in the Pacific.

Specialty? Naval Aviation Observer and Naval Flight Officer

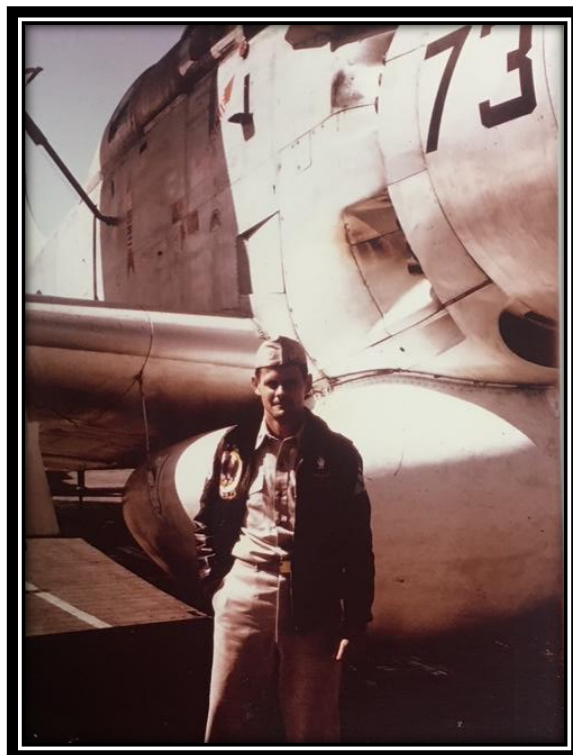
Favorite duty station/assignment? While serving in VAW 11, North Island, San Diego, CA, he served in WESTPAC and SOUTHPAC aboard the USS YORKTOWN (CVS 10) and the USS BENNINGTON (CVS20) with Det. T and Det. Q using U.S. Navy AD5W (EA1E) for Carrier Airborne Early Warning.

Family? John met his wife, Susan, through a college friend in Pittsburgh while he was training with a major oil company to be a technical services manager. They have one daughter and one son.

How did you end up here? John and Susan moved to the Olympia area to be near their daughter.

What have you been up to lately? Since moving to this area, John has really enjoyed meeting and collaborating with new companions of both the Military Order of World Wars and the Military Officers Association of America.

Any ideas about what you would like to see the chapter do in 2026 and beyond? Our chapter could support Wreaths Across America.



All photos courtesy John McConnel.

Monthly Chapter Meeting

Chapter Meeting will be 21 January, gather at 1130, call to order at 1200. This month's planned speaker is Derek Sanders, Thurston County Sheriff. We will be meeting at Panorama's Seventeen51 Restaurant, 1751 Circle Ln SE, Lacey, WA 98503. RSVP No Later Than Friday, 16 January. Meal options will be:

**Mandarin Salad with poached shrimp and sesame ginger dressing, or
Macaroni and Cheese, or
Reuben Grill Sandwich with choice of fruit, green salad, or fries**

Price will be \$20.50 and include tax and gratuity.

A Note About 2026 Meal Costs - Like everything, the cost of our meal is going up.

In January 2025, our price per meal was \$17.85 with tax and gratuity. This included water but no coffee. At that time, the cost to add coffee was negotiated from an additional \$3.00 per person to \$2.00. Consequently, our 2025 price was \$19.85 and we added one dollar (to cover the cost of guest meals) making the luncheon cost to members \$21. In March 2025, the cost per meal went up a dollar and rather than pass the cost on to us, Panorama absorbed the cost.

For 2026, the price per meal is \$19.16 with tax and gratuity. The price to add just coffee/tea would be \$3.50, and the price to add a dessert would be \$5.00 (plus tax and gratuity). Rather than require all members to pay for coffee/tea and/or dessert when not everyone typically partakes, the Board decided to not include any drinks or desserts with the meals – water will always be available free.

Panorama conveyed their regrets, but all their costs are increasing, for instance coffee up to \$15/lb. They cannot justify charging residents \$3.50 and continuing to charge us \$2.00.

The Board voted to set the meal cost at \$20.50 per meal (\$19.16 with \$1.34 added to cover the cost of guest meals).

Those wanting an additional beverage and/or dessert may order from the server and pay them directly.

Connect!



Next Board Meeting

January 14, 2026, 5:30 pm. Via Teams.
Contact Ro Marcus or Chris McManus
for a Teams invite.

Notable January Dates

- 01/01 – New Year's Day
- 01/06 – Epiphany
- 01/09 – Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
- 01/12 – 1200, Ladies Lunch, Black Bear Diner, 3425 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia
- 01/14 – 1730, Staff Meeting, via TEAMS
- 01/19 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (3rd Monday)
- 01/21 – 1200, Chapter Lunch Meeting, gather 1130, eat 1200, Panorama Seventeen51 Restaurant
- 01/27 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 01/29 – Chinese New Year

Ladies Lunch Club

When: January 12 at 1200, noon

Where: Black Bear Diner 3425 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia

Please RSVP to: Christine McManus

If anyone would like a ride or wants to carpool, mention that when you RSVP and something can be arranged

Donation/ Lunch Options

Venue: seventeen51 restaurant - Panorama, 1751 Circle Ln. SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

Please RSVP no later than the morning of Friday, January 16, 2025 to Doug White,.

Please include menu entree selection in your email or snail mail RSVP.

Date and Time: Wednesday, January 21, gather at 11:30 am and call to order and lunch at noon.

With our new menu arrangement, we do not suffer a penalty for attendees that may show up without prior notice, so do not let having forgotten to RSVP keep you from joining us. On the other hand, it is very beneficial for both the chapter and the restaurant to have a good head count ahead of time for planning purposes, so we do continue to request that you RSVP to let us know you are coming and which entrée you would like.

	Mandarin Salad with Poached Shrimp and Sesame Ginger Dressing	\$20.50	X		= \$
	Reuben Grill with choice of fries, green salad, or fruit	\$20.50	X		= \$
	Macaroni and Cheese	\$20.50	X		= \$
	Total Lunch				= \$

The lunch cost is **\$20.50**

Water provided. Tax and gratuity included.

Gluten Free items are available from the menu on request.

Scholarship	= \$
Annual Dues \$20.00 Member, \$10.00 Surviving Spouse	= \$
Total Amount Mailed	= \$

-----Tear line for mail in payments-----

The treasurer encourages members to send in payment for meals along with any dues or donations by mail beforehand to ensure menu item entree selection and RSVP count.

QR code for CheddarUP app option to pay:	
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Payment at door must be check or exact change in cash.

Please send a confirmation to:

Doug White

OR

Mail payment and confirmation to:

Olympia MOAA

PO Box 5957

Lacey, WA 98509-5957

Is Everyone OK Out There?

We have certainly had a run of historically bad weather with torrential rain and heavy winds leading to flooding, mud slides and downed trees. If any chapter members could use some help, don't be afraid to ask. If you just need someone to run an errand or pick something up for you, there is probably a chapter member who can lend that helping hand. In the bigger picture, while I anticipate most, if not all of our chapter members have the financial stability to handle a setback if they experience a weather catastrophe, if anyone does need some assistance, or knows a veteran or service member who needs assistance, keep in mind that MOAA has a Crisis Relief Fund for just this sort of situation and we can help pursue funds through that process. We also have a chapter member who is a critical member of Thurston County Veterans Services and we know a little about the Lacey Veterans Hub. There are resources, if you know anyone who needs a helping hand. **Please reach out and we can connect people with resources.**