



**Middle Tennessee Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P. O. Box 50252
Nashville, TN 37205-0252**

MOAA
Council & Chapter Affairs
201 North Washington St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

29 April 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Middle Tennessee Chapter, it gives me great pleasure to submit our "Level of Excellence Award" addendum to our application for the 2020 calendar year.

This addendum supports our objective and subjective LOE submission for 2021. We understand MOAA Council and Chapters would like to have every submission in a similar format for judging; however, we feel that this document should be the actual one reviewed for the Level of Excellence Award as it provides a much more complete picture of our Chapter. This will be the version that we share with our Chapter members.

Respectfully,

//Signed//

Mike Patenaude
Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) USA
President, Middle TN Chapter, MOAA

Chapter Notes on the “Objective” Portion of the Evaluation

1. Key Middle TN Chapter (MTC) Officers: President - LTC (Ret) Mike Patenaude; 1st Vice-President - Lt.Col. (Ret) Karon Uzzell-Baggett; Membership Chair- COL (Ret) Doug Minton; and Treasurer - 1LT Deryl Bauman are all members of MOAA National.
2. 100% of our Chapter Membership as represented in the MOAA Committee Module (CM) are members of the MOAA national organization.
3. The Membership Chair of our Chapter accessed the CM quite often during the year of competition.
4. Our Chapter Legislative Affairs Liaison is LTC (Ret) Doug Gilbert. He is so designated in the CM and he has selected *Advocacy* on the *MOAA Newsletter*.
5. Our Chapter Membership Chair is so designated in the CM.
6. Our Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison is Mrs. Patricia Bergquist, and she is so designated in the CM.
7. Our Chapter has an EFT account established with MOAA.
8. Our Chapter is honored to have two Chapter members serving roles in the Tennessee Council of Chapters: Immediate Past President (COL Doug Minton) and Surviving Spouse Liaison (Mrs. Patricia Bergquist). We have belonged to this organization and actively participated since its inception in 1968. LTC Mike Patenaude is our current representative to the Council.
9. Our Chapter President has confirmed that he is opted-in to receive the MOAA Newsletter.

Chapter Submission of the “Subjective” Portion of the Evaluation:

Section 1:

1. Grassroots Advocacy

On 5 February 2020, the Tennessee Veterans Coalition (TNVET) hosted its “Veterans Day on the Hill” in the James K. Polk Office Building in Nashville. The photo at right includes participants (left to right) LTC (Ret) Pete Warner, President of the Stones River Chapter; and MTC members Lt. Col. (Ret) Scott Findley, LTC Doug Gilbert (MTC Legislative Affairs Liaison), Maj. Gen. (Ret) Carl Schneider, COL Doug Minton, LTC (Ret) Thad Vann, and LTC Mike Patenaude (Chapter President). Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett (MTC First Vice President) and COL (Ret) John Furgess were also present but missed the photo opportunity.



The photo on the left shows the delegation meeting on the same date with MTC member COL (Ret) Sam Whitson in his capacity as an elected member of the House of Representatives, where he represents the 65th District. Pictured are (left to right) COL Minton; LTC Vann; CDR (Ret) Ivan Adames, President of the Ft. Campbell Chapter; LTC Gilbert; LTC Warner; Representative/COL Whitson; LT. Col. Findley; and LTC Patenaude.

Our Chapter was precluded from any further meetings with legislators during 2020 due to Covid-19 protocols. We did not schedule any legislators for speakers at our Chapter meetings during 2020 because of our commitment to a mandate to remain politically nonpartisan as an affiliate organization of MOAA National; particularly in an election year.

2. Community Engagement

Scholarship

Our Chapter again provided two scholarship grants of \$1000 each for a Veteran attending Belmont University and Lipscomb University; for students falling into the categories of: permanently wounded/disabled Veterans, combat wounded Veteran (Purple Heart), or failing to find one of the previous categories, a deserving Veteran or

child of a Veteran. Both programs are administered by the Veterans Services Departments at these universities.

We continued to build on a local endowment for what will become the “Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America Endowed Veterans Scholarship at Lipscomb University”. This opportunity is open ended in that we are not on a timeline to build the funds to the desired endowment level. We contributed an additional \$2,654 to this endowment in 2020.

We also continued to build on our 4th MOAA National Scholarship for dependents endowment with a gift of \$1,000. We currently have funded \$8,000 toward our 4th \$25,000 Endowment. We have already funded three (3) \$25,000 endowed scholarships for the MOAA National Scholarship program.

MOAA Foundation

This year the MOAA Foundation became a local grassroots endeavor for us when two veterans (one Veteran through OSDTN and one Veteran through Matthew 25) received Covid-19 Relief Fund grants because of our outreach with these organizations. In addition, our Chapter continued its financial support of the MOAA Foundation, providing a contribution of \$250 in April 2020. Our records indicate that we have now contributed \$1625 to this very worthwhile national program initiative. The Middle TN Chapter is a proud member of the MOAA Heritage Society.

ROTC/JROTC Support

Our Chapter continued its support of local area ROTC programs at Vanderbilt University (NROTC and AROTC) and Tennessee State University (AFROTC). We presented the MOAA ROTC Leadership Award to deserving Cadets/Midshipman at both schools during their spring awards programs. Covid-19 protocols in place at the time of award ceremonies meant that they were all virtual which precluded us from getting any photos of the presentations. Our ROTC Support Coordinator, Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett was able to maintain contact with the cadre at each school during the scholastic year.

Our Chapter continued to support the JROTC program at 14 High Schools in our greater geographic region. The Covid-19 protocols at each school seemed to be a constantly moving target, resulting in all awards being mailed to the program Senior Instructors at each school.

USO Ft. Campbell – Nashville

Our Chapter continued to support USO Nashville; this year with a \$250 financial contribution made in April 2020. However, the USO Center at the Nashville Airport closed in March 2020 due to Covid restrictions and did not reopen until October 2020, meaning that our member/volunteers were not able to participate at the center at the same level that they have in the past.

Middle TN Chapter Memorial Day Ceremony

Our annual Memorial Day remembrance had to be delayed due to Covid-19 protocols at the State Veterans Cemetery; however, we were eventually able to hold a participant- limited, socially distanced ceremony with the assistance of the Cemetery staff and personnel from the Navy Operational Support Center – Nashville at the Middle Tennessee Veterans Cemetery on 13 June 2021. The photo at right shows the Navy detail presenting the colors with MTC President Mike Patenaude.



The photo at left, taken following the event, shows the limited MTC membership that



were able to participate in the ceremony due to Covid-19 protocols. Pictured at left (left to right) are MTC members: COL Doug Minton; CAPT (Ret) Ted Edwards (MTC Chaplain); LTC Doug Gilbert; LTC Mike Patenaude; CAPT Dale Lewelling; CAPT Larry Cotton; Major (Ret) Wayne Plump; Capt. Hal Sauer; Mrs. Lynn Womack – Surviving Spouse; and Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett.

Operation Stand Down TN (OSDTN)

OSDTN is a long-standing provider of resources for Veterans and their families in the Middle TN area (and now across the state). These resources are primarily focused on transition, employment, housing benefits and connection to the community. Our Chapter has been a supporter of OSDTN since its inception in 1993.

On 27 October 2020, Brig. Gen. (Ret) Eden Murrie, the newly announced CEO of OSDTN and a MTC member was our featured speaker at our Chapter's second in person meeting following a long Covid break. At this meeting she was presented with a \$250 contribution by the Chapter. The photo at right shows Brig. Gen. Murrie accepting the check from LTC Patenaude.



The annual OSDTN Heroes Breakfast fundraiser event became a virtual event this year and individual members contributed \$1000 to a virtual table in September 2020.

USMCR Toys for Tots



On 17 November 2020, at our third in person meeting following the Covid break the Chapter collected toys for the Marines of Kilo Company 3/23, USMCR in support of their annual Toys for Tots program in Middle Tennessee. (Pictured at left – toys collected at the meeting.)

Centerstone Military Services

Our Chapter has supported Centerstone Military Services since 2018, because of their exceptional process of providing mental health services to Veterans and Active Duty/Reserve personnel and their families in the Middle Tennessee area. We continued our financial support in the form of a \$250 contribution made in October 2020.

Matthew 25

Matthew 25 is a nonprofit agency providing transitional housing, structured programs, job placement and referral services for homeless veterans referred by the VA. The agency serves approximately 200 homeless men each year in the Middle TN area, with 50% of them being veterans. Our Chapter continued our financial support of this mission with a contribution of \$250 in October 2020.

Fisher House

Our Chapter has supported the Tennessee Fisher House located in Murfreesboro, TN as part of the Tennessee Council of Chapters support during its approval for construction and subsequent opening in 2013. In 2020 we were contacted by a member of their Board and asked to support an initiative to build a Fisher House on the grounds or near the VA Hospital in Nashville, TN. (A copy of our letter supporting this initiative is attached.) During that conversation we were informed that due to Covid-19 shutting so many businesses down the Murfreesboro Fisher House was having to purchase a large quantity of their supplies that were normally donated. In response our Chapter made a financial contribution of \$250 to the Tennessee Fisher House in October 2020.

Other Community Organizations MTC Supports

In addition to organizations which we fund with contributions, our Chapter continued to provide a voice for the following organizations by advertising their events on our website and at our meetings and recognizing the many members who have become actively involved in the missions of these organizations: *“A Soldiers Child”*, *“Joshua Chamberlain Society – Nashville”*, and *“Wreathes Across America”*. Each of these organizations provide veteran support and engagement in our local community.

3. Recruiting and Retention

Our Chapter Recruiting is dependent upon two sources of attracting prospective members: “word of mouth” recruiting by existing members and prospective members who find out about us through MOAA or our website (<https://www.mtcmoaa.org>). In 2020 we attracted 12 new members using a combination of these methods. We increase our initial appeal to prospective members through our “Year of Joining” free membership to new members, so that they are given time to make the decision on whether we are a good fit for them, before they must hand over any funds. We have several members who have arrived at that point of life through either age or physical condition that we carry as Emeritus members; the majority of which have had a longtime affiliation with the Chapter. We do not charge these members’ dues. In addition, we were able to sign up 15 of our existing/new members as MOAA “Basic” members in 2020.

Our Chapter retention goal is straightforward; to provide our members effective opportunities to serve veterans while providing greater connection with fellow military officers and the greater Middle Tennessee community. We encounter many former and retired officers in the Middle TN area and most re-connect with the military camaraderie easily.

Our retention plan begins with the monthly programs, as we engage our members by inviting influential community leaders and personalities as guests at the monthly luncheons to provide insights and generate discussion. This became a greater challenge in 2020, when we were unable to meet for five months (April – August). During this period, our Board continued to meet via email, and we continued to publish and distribute our newsletter and keep our website current. We increased the use of our email as a means of providing Covid-19 information and links to outreach opportunities. Unfortunately, we did lose six members who were confronted with enough Covid-19 issues that they no longer felt our Chapter was relative to their needs.

Section 2:

1. Chapter’s Leadership Succession Plan



Pictured at left is the 2020-2021 slate of officers being sworn in at our January 2020 meeting. From left to right are 1LT. Deryl Bauman -Treasurer; COL Kent Crossley – Second VP; Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett – First VP; and LTC Mike Patenaude – President; COL Doug Minton – Immediate Past President, TN Council of Chapters.

The board is our leadership lab; we invite members to meet with the board, be active, join the board and then work their way into the succession plan beginning as initiative chairs (scholarship, ROTC support, JROTC support, etc.) then moving to 2nd VP as an understudy, 1st VP as Program Chair and eventually President.

Several of our prior Presidents remain on the board, allowing them to perform as mentors on the initiatives undertaken by the Chapter.

Like many Chapters we had often struggled in the past with enticing members to assume leadership roles; however, by 2011 we had established a succession plan and it has been going strong ever since. Our current President is the seventh person serving in this role (two-year terms) since the plan was put into action.

Extra Credit:

1. Accomplishment of the Chapter in response to the Pandemic.

At the beginning of 2020, our chapter started off strong with the January Annual Report to Membership meeting, followed by our February meeting featuring MOAA National Board Member Dr. Donald Thompson, Col. USAF Retired (pictured at right). Dr. Thompson spoke on the value of serving as a MOAA national board member and answered questions about what seemed to be an emerging coronavirus problem, little did we know! Two weeks following our March board meeting, COVID gathering restrictions were imposed, forcing us to cancel the monthly membership meeting. We conducted our April board meeting through email and determined to remain flexible while looking at ways to keep our membership engaged. We continued monthly newsletters to members and continued to conduct our monthly board meetings by email.



A bright spot in the early days of the pandemic is that we were able to conduct our annual Memorial Day Veteran Cemetery ceremony by shifting it from May to June because restrictions were more open then. We had a full outdoor ceremony with Navy color guard and members present to honor the fallen from each service. We monitored COVID restrictions, and as they relaxed, we were able to have in-person membership meetings in the months of September, October, and November by adopting COVID protocols. We wore masks, shifted from a buffet to plated meals, spaced our tables, and reduced the number at each table. We had great turnouts and great presenters for each of our programs. At the November meeting we conducted our annual Toys for Tots drive. We did not meet in December which is our normal practice. In summary, we pushed through 2020 with agility, kept members informed, and created as many in-

person events as possible to keep our members engaged with each other and with the chapter.

(Even though this narrative is about 2020, I wanted to share that our engagement is continuing to improve today as we have entered 2021. In January, the winter surge restrictions caused us to shift our meeting to Zoom where our board conducted our Annual Report to Membership. Thankfully, conditions in Middle Tennessee reduced restrictions again and we conducted both our February and March meetings in person. While we were precluded from some activity during the past year, we continued to engage whenever possible, and as a result the Middle Tennessee Chapter is emerging strong.)