



**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

25 April 2022

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 2021 calendar year.

This addendum supports our objective and subjective LOE submission for the 2021 membership year. We are submitting this document with the request that it 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//

Karon Uzzell-Baggett
Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) USAF
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; Vice President - Lt. Col. (Ret) Karon Uzzell-Baggett; Membership Chair- COL (Ret) Doug Minton; and Treasurer - 1LT Deryl Bauman were all active members of MOAA National during the 2021 membership year.
2. 100% of our Chapter Membership were members of the MOAA national organization during 2021 and were so entered in the MOAA Committee Module (CM).
3. The Membership Chair of our Chapter accessed the CM quite often during the year of competition.
4. Our Chapter Legislative Affairs Liaison for the first half of 2021 was LTC (Ret) Doug Gilbert. He was so designated in the CM, and he had selected *Advocacy* on the *MOAA Newsletter* prior to his resignation. We did not appoint a new Legislative Affairs Liaison until 2022; however; CDR (Ret.) Ted Edwards stepped in to fill this position. He accepted this assignment and was recorded in the CM as such in January 2022.
5. Our Chapter Membership Chair was so designated in the CM during 2021.
6. Our Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison is Mrs. Patricia Bergquist, and she was so designated in the CM during 2021.
7. Our Chapter had an EFT account established with MOAA during 2021.
8. We have belonged to the Tennessee Council of Chapters organization and actively participated since its inception in 1968. During 2021 COL (Ret) Doug Minton served as Immediate Past President and Mrs. Patricia Bergquist served as the Surviving Spouse Liaison for the Council. LTC Mike Patenaude served as our representative to the Council.
9. Our Chapter President was opted-in to receive the MOAA Newsletter during 2021.

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

Section 1:

1. Grassroots Advocacy

Advocacy in Action participation became grassroots through the Zoom format that was used in 2021. Our Chapter was represented by COL (ret) Doug Minton and Lt Col (ret) Scott Findley, USAF on calls with Congressmen Jim Cooper, John Rose, and Mark Green, as well as with the staff of Senator Bill Hagerty. We had very good discussions with the three Congressmen, but we only garnered support on H.R.2436 (Burn Pit legislation) from Cooper and H.R.2127 (Toxic Exposure legislation) from Cooper and Green. Our session with Senator Hagerty’s staff was less productive (although he eventually signed on to support S. 437 the Burn Pit legislation). We did have particularly good response from our Chapter members when we requested that they call, write or email on the three subjects for which MOAA was advocating.

In a normal year, this section would include the participation of our members in the Tennessee Veterans (TNVET) Coalition February “Day on the TN Hill” event, where we assisted in calling upon all state legislators in support of veteran’s TNVET proposed legislation. Unfortunately, our in-person event was cancelled because of the Covid-19 protocols in place at the time and contact was left to individual actions. At the state level, TNVET was successful in obtaining passage of the “Major Trevor Joseph Act” which secured burial services at a state veterans cemetery for an individual who dies on active duty on any date that was requested by their family.

In April 2021, the Chapter heard from TN State Senator Heidi Campbell at our monthly meeting. Senator Campbell (pictured at right) was newly elected in 2020, so much of her presentation dealt with the procedural surprises that she encountered in her first year. However, she was able to address progress to circumvent an issue on the Major Trevor Joseph Act.



In June 2021 the Chapter heard from Chapter member COL (Ret) Sam Whitson (pictured at left), an elected member of the House of Representatives, where he represents the 65th District. Representative Whitson lead us in a lively discussion of his efforts in moving a political transparency Bill through the TN House of Representatives for consideration and eventual vote.

2. Community Engagement

Our scholarship initiatives form a key component of our community engagement. We continue to provide a \$1000 one-time scholarship for a veteran enrolled at both Belmont University and Lipscomb University (both located in Nashville, TN). This year, in conjunction with the Brentwood Rotary, we facilitated an additional one-time Brentwood Rotary Club donation of \$1000 each to veteran scholars at Belmont and Lipscomb Universities, in memory of a longtime member of both organizations, BG (ret) Roger Wheelwright who passed away in 2021. (Pictured at right: LTC (ret) Tom Carr, USA, MTC and Brentwood Rotary member with the Lipscomb recipient of the Scholarship).



Our Chapter has three National MOAA Scholarships fully funded and is in the process of funding a fourth endowed scholarship. We also continue to build on a Veterans Scholarship at Lipscomb University which will become a fully endowed scholarship when fully funded.

In 2021 our Chapter continued its community engagement by supporting a variety of Veterans Service Organizations in several diverse ways:

We provided financial contributions in the amount of \$250 each to the MOAA Foundation, USO Ft. Campbell-Nashville, Fisher House Foundation-Murfreesboro, and three local veterans service organizations: Operation Stand Down TN (OSDTN), Centerstone, and Matthew 25.



(Pictured at left: 1LT Deryl Bauman, USA; COL Doug Minton; Brig. Gen. (ret) Eden Murrie, USAF, and CEO of OSDTN; President Mike Patenaude; and LTC (ret) Doug Gilbert, USA following the OSDTN presentation at our May meeting.)

We also actively supported veterans service organizations by attending their fund-raising initiatives. In November 2021, over 22 of our Chapter members attended the OSDTN annual “Heroes Breakfast” event.

(Pictured from left to right, LTC (ret) Wanda Graham, USA; CAPT (ret) Dana McLendon, USN; CAPT (ret) Larry Cotton, USN; CAPT (ret) Dale Lewelling, USN; CDR Ted Edwards; Lt. Col. (ret) Jim Humphrey, USAF; LTC Mike Patenaude; Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett; Capt. Ed Ziegler, USMC; and COL Doug Minton.)



In addition to contributing to service organizations, we called upon them as speakers to widen their impact amongst our members.



We heard from Matthew-25 Executive Director, Mr. Jim Ward (pictured at left), at our August meeting. Matthew 25 provides housing and mentorship for homeless veterans in the Nashville area. In October 2021 we heard from the Ms. Ashley Briggs of the Middle Tennessee Alzheimer’s Association (pictured at right) about brain health and how the organization is collaborating with veterans across middle Tennessee.



Chapter members collected toys for the USMCR “Toys for Tots” program and new clothing items for OSDTN at our November 2021 meeting.



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.

Our Chapter supports three local ROTC programs at Vanderbilt University (NROTC and AROTC) and Tennessee State University (AFROTC). We prepared the MOAA ROTC Leadership Award for presentation at virtual ceremonies held for deserving Cadets/Midshipman at both schools in 2021.

We also supported the JROTC program at fourteen High Schools in our greater geographic region. We were able to physically present two of the awards (pictured at right: CAPT Larry Cotton, USN and MTC JROTC Coordinator presenting at the Columbia High School Naval JROTC Awards Presentation) at Columbia High School and Springfield High School, both in May 2021. The remainder of our certificates were provided to the programs and presented in a variety of manners to the deserving students.



As in the past our Chapter members participated in Congressional Academy Boards for Representatives and Senators in our greater geographic area: CPT Reuben Dickenson,

USA (Representative Green); CDR (ret) John Ohlinger, USN (Representative Cooper); Col. (ret) Duffy White, USMC (Representative Rose); CAPT (ret) Dale Lewelling, USN; and LTC Ryan Cernoch, ARNG (Senator Blackburn). We were also represented by Capt. Hal Sauer, USAF, and Lt. Col. (ret) Jeff Hill, USAF, as Air Force Academy Liaison Officers.

Our annual Memorial Day remembrance returned to its normal timeframe at the Middle Tennessee Veterans Cemetery with the assistance of the Cemetery staff and personnel from the Navy Operational Support Center on 29 May 2021. The Ceremony was well represented by the Chapter as well as a busload of families from a nearby retirement center.

3. Recruiting and Retention

Our most effective Chapter recruiting continues to be a combination of “word of mouth” recruiting by existing members and prospective members who find out about us through MOAA Chapter locator or our website (<https://www.mtcmoaa.org>). In 2021 we attracted 11 new members, maintaining a stable active membership of 250. 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 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.

We successfully added eight new members to the MOAA National membership through the MOAA Basic model in 2021. We did utilize the MOAA Near-real-time recruiting lists, however; to date we have not been able to attract any new members from those lists, probably because of needing to further refine our Zip Code list with National.

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. We held one virtual meeting in 2021, our January meeting in which we presented our annual Year-In-Review of 2020. After that all of 2021 meetings were in person. The variety of speakers/subjects is key to our member retention. In addition to the programs already mentioned, in February 2021 we held our annual Personal Affairs meeting and heard from Mrs. Jane Zeisler, a



local ombudsman and USA surviving spouse. In March we heard from Dr. Tom Seals (pictured at left), a former Marine NCO, and founder of “God’s Word for Warriors”. Our Chapter members were impressed with Dr. Seals’ story to the extent that he was asked to become our very first Honorary Member following his presentation.

In May we heard from Coach Casey Alexander of the Belmont University Men’s Basketball program. That meeting was held at OSDTN in Nashville and attracted several new members who

attended because the downtown location was closer to their employment.

In July of 2021 we had the particularly good fortune to receive an in-person meeting with our Board, followed by a highly informative presentation from CAPT (ret) Erin Stone, USN, MOAA Senior Director, Council and Chapter Affairs. (pictured at right interacting with MTC members LT Bill Lutche, USCG and CPT Art Jacobs, USA, following her presentation)



In August we heard from Mr. Ron Hughes, the first Intelligence Operations Specialist of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deployed to the Tennessee Fusion Center, providing intelligence support to law enforcement, public safety and private sector partners in Tennessee.

Section 2

Chapter's Leadership Succession Plan

The MTC 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, Outreach coordinator, etc.) then moving to 2nd VP as an understudy, 1st VP as Program Chair and eventually President. While the process has been viable in the past, we are beginning to see members who are not willing to commit that many years to the leadership roles as described. We are in the beginning phase of determining if our approach is going to continue to be as successful as it has been in the past. We are fortunate that several leaders have been willing to fulfill multiple roles during this period. We are also dealing with what appears to be our own version of the "great resignation" as we have received notice of three Board/Officer resignations that will occur by the end of 2021 into the first quarter of 2022. In response to both issues, our plan is to market the leadership opportunities more aggressively to new members as the year progresses.

Section 3

Extra Credit

In November 2021, we effectively utilized technology to enhance our chapter luncheon meeting featuring a briefing on Space Force. Using the technology newly available at OSDTN, we were able to devise a virtual platform to host a discussion on the process of creating U. Space Force. This presentation featured speaker, Lt. Col. (Ret) Michael Gilchrist,



USAF, located at Los Angeles Air Base in California and an in-person speaker, Lt. Col. Michael Wilson, a Space Force Officer assigned to the USAF ROTC program at Tennessee State University. The ability to have both speakers sharing graphics and interacting with each other and the audience throughout the briefing provided an exceptional program.

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Attendees, which included two ROTC detachment commanders and two AROTC cadets, were provided a thorough overview of the Nation's newest service capabilities, and our members were presented with an opportunity to interact with both officers. The ability to use new technology (for us) tied to a subject that had very broad appeal allowed us to max out the available venue space and hold a very positive event.