



**Middle Tennessee Chapter**  
**A 2023 5-Star Level of Excellence Award Chapter**  
**Military Officers Association of America**



Web: <https://www.mtcmoaa.org>

May 2024

Editor: Doug Minton

**MTC Monthly Meeting:**

**28 May 2024; 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

MTC Monthly Luncheon Meeting  
**“My Life: From Nazi Occupation to Democracy”**

**Mrs. Dietlinde Spears**

ONCC, 115 Gardengate Drive, Franklin TN 37069

Mrs. Dietlinde Spears is the author of “My Four-Dimensional Life” which is a first-hand account of what it was like to experience life as a German child in Nazi Germany, the harrowing flight from the invading Russian army toward the end of World War II, and eventually moving to the United States as a military bride and adjusting to life in a democratic nation.

Mrs. Spears is a native of Silesia, East Germany, which was annexed to Poland following World War II. Her father was a member of the Nazi party and held a high government post. In 1945, the advancing Russian Army forced the family to flee on foot to Prague, Czechoslovakia. The family later returned to Silesia when it was under Polish rule and would live there for 13 years. In 1958, the family was able to move to West Germany and in 1961, she married Raymond Spears and converted to Christianity.

The couple moved to the United States in 1961 and lived throughout the country and Europe during Raymond Spears’ United States Air Force career. In 1980, they settled in Nashville. Mrs. Spears later taught German at Lipscomb University and lectured throughout the country on her wartime and post-war experiences.

She is the author of four books, (the one referenced above is still in print and available on Amazon for purchase). This book provides a poignant memoir of life after the world has been at war, mixing tenderness, faith, and family with the physical and emotional ordeals endured by the German people after the war, and in particular Mrs. Spears as she handled life under Communist rule, eventually came to West Germany, and finally found herself living under democracy in the United States of America.

She and her husband reside in Nashville and have two adult children and four grandchildren. They are members of Crieve Hall Church of Christ.

**Don’t Forget!**

**MTC Memorial Day Observance**

Saturday, 25 May at 10:30 AM  
 Middle TN State Veterans Cemetery  
 7931 McCrory Lane, Nashville, TN 37221

**Officers**

**President**

CAPT Larry Cotton, USN Retired

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Mrs. Patricia Bergquist

**Chaplain & Legislative Liaison**

CDR Ted Edwards, USN Retired

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Lt Col Arlie Haddix, USAF Retired

**Chapter Contact Information**

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***Still Serving in 2024!***

The Middle Tennessee Chapter has once again received generous funding through the 2024 MOAA Community Outreach Grant campaign.

We will be able to partner with Operation Stand Down Tennessee (OSDTN) on two critical projects benefiting area veterans and military spouses.

Our first project will involve a military spouse employment seminar in Fall 2024, and we have \$2,000 for this project.

Next, we will repeat our partnership with OSDTN for their holiday market experience benefiting veterans which will be held in December. We have \$1,500 to devote to this project.

More details about each project will be forthcoming and there will be opportunities to “still keep serving!”

**President’s Letter**

May is National Military Appreciation Month celebrating the contributions of military members and their families to the security of our nation, especially in the chaos of the international environment. The country has overcome many challenges throughout its history and at every turn the military members have served with honor when called upon. The month ends with remembrance of those military members who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation. **Our chapter annually conducts a short but solemn ceremony acknowledgment of those sacrifices and celebrating the memories of its members who have passed on during the year between the ceremonies. Please join us at the Middle TN State Veterans Cemetery on Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 am. We meet around the large flagpole near the back of the cemetery where the Submarine Force Memorial stands.**

May is also the month when high schools and universities celebrate the achievements of outstanding students, and our chapter supports 3 ROTC and 13 JROTC programs with special medals and certificates for the best of their members. The ROTC medals and nearly all the JROTC medals have already been presented, but please remember this is an annual process and we will need presenters for 2025. I have found engagement with the ROTC and JROTC programs a great way to keep in touch with outstanding youth and think you will, too!

While the TN Legislature has probably completed its business for this session, the US Congress is continuing important work despite the distractions of election in November. It remains a continuing fight to fend off the budget cutters who see the Defense budget as a vulnerable source for reductions, especially to “people” programs. Please continue to use MOAA’s Legislative Action Center (at <https://moaa.quorum.us>) to make your views on important issues known! You can see the latest updates nationally at the following link: <https://moaa.quorum.us/video/>.

We’re making great progress in getting annual chapter dues paid this year, but if you haven’t paid your annual chapter membership dues, please do so soon! We have already started providing some funding for local military-related charities based on the funds available through membership. Please continue to recruit others and pay your dues by sending a check to MTC MOAA at P.O. Box 50252, Nashville, TN, 37205-0252 or you can bring a check or cash to our next luncheon.

Finally, at our next monthly meeting, we will be honored to hear the story of Mrs. Dietlinde Spiers, who was a child in Nazi Germany, then fled with her family from the Russian Army. I’m sure you will find her story captivating! Please join us!  
 Larry Cotton, CAPT, US Navy (ret.)  
 President

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CHAPTER  
Military Officers Association of America  
P. O. Box 50252  
Nashville, TN 37205-0252



May is National Military Appreciation Month

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### Upcoming Programs & Events

**25 May 2024; 10:30 AM**

#### **“MTC Memorial Day Ceremony”**

Middle TN State Veterans Cemetery  
7931 McCrory Lane, Nashville, TN 37221

**28 May 2024; 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

MTC Monthly Luncheon Meeting

#### **“My Life: From Nazi Occupation to Democracy”**

**Mrs. Dietlinde Spears**

ONCC, 115 Gardengate Drive, Franklin TN 37069

**6 June 2024; 7-8:00 AM**

#### **“MTC Monthly Board Meeting”**

NGATN , 4332 Kenilwood Drive, Nashville, TN 37204

**22 June 2024: 4-7:00 PM**

#### **“Nashville VetFest 2024”**

Bob Woodruff Foundation

Skydeck on Broadway, 5055 Broadway, Nashville, TN

**25 June 2024; 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

MTC Monthly Luncheon Meeting

#### **“77 Letters”**

**Mrs. Susan Hunter**

ONCC, 115 Gardengate Drive, Franklin TN 37069

**11 July 2024; 7-8:00 AM**

#### **“MTC Monthly Board Meeting”**

NGATN , 4332 Kenilwood Drive, Nashville, TN 37204

**23 July 2024; 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

MTC Monthly Luncheon Meeting

#### **“TN Council of Chapters, MOAA”**

**Lt Col. Pete Warner, USAF Retired**

President

ONCC, 115 Gardengate Drive, Franklin TN 37069

**20 September 2024; 12:00 - 3:00 PM**

#### **“OSDTN Hunger Action Project”**

MTC Service Project - Packing Food Bags

OSDTN, 1125 South 12th Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203

### Legislative Update

“The only way our elected officials know the needs of the American people – and most importantly veterans – is when we show up and we explain it to them,” wrote Sgt. James Powers, USA (Ret). That quote comes from the latest edition of *Military Officer*, our MOAA magazine.

I would be the first to say that it is highly important that we all express our views and concerns to our members of Congress. Unfortunately, I notice there seem to be fewer and fewer members of Congress who have ever worn our country’s uniform, been sworn into the armed forces at any level, or worked under authority of the Commander-in-Chief and Chain of Command. The world and the American People look entirely different for those of us who have had that uniformed service experience. That disparity is particularly evident for us in MOAA who have known that experience. These two world views do not match up very well – hence the rationale behind the urgent need to take the initiative to voice our opinions with our elected officials.

On 17 April, MOAA leadership visited elected officials in Congress for what was called Advocacy in Action Day. It was a day of face-to-face contact, and the point of the above quote from Sgt. Powers on the value of speaking directly with congressional leaders. Eye-to-eye contact is powerful, and there is no substitute for it when opportunities come around. In a half year, the whole of the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate will be up for election (including one Tennessee senator). There will be opportunities for you to speak up as members of MOAA and our Middle Tennessee Chapter – do take them.

The Major Richard Star Act was one of the key pieces of legislation the national-level MOAA team met with leading senators on 17 April about – legislation to allow retirees to receive BOTH their DoD retirement pay AND VA disability compensation without the latter offsetting the former. There is widespread support for this legislation at the level of 74 senate cosponsors and 327 house cosponsors, but getting it included and funded in the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is not a done deal because it would be expensive in a time of frugality. This needs to be done in the next 4 months.

Need I say more? Please take this tasking to heart.

CDR Ted Edwards, USN (ret.)  
MTC Legislative Liaison