



**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

21 April 2023

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 2022 calendar year.

This addendum supports our objective and subjective LOE submission for the 2022 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, USAF Retired
President, Middle TN Chapter, MOAA

Chapter Notes on the “Objective” Portion of the Evaluation

1. The Chapter began the 2022 year with a full slate of officers: President, Vice President, Secretary/Membership Chair, Legislative Liaison, Treasurer, Surviving Spouse Liaison; all of which were designated in the MOAA Committee Module (CM). Unfortunately, in July 2022, our Vice President resigned due to job conflicts and that position remained vacant for the duration of the year.
2. 97% of our active Chapter Membership were members of the MOAA national organization during 2022, and were so identified in the CM.
3. The Membership Chair of our Chapter accessed the CM frequently throughout 2022.
4. The Middle TN Chapter (MTC) is an active member/participant in the TN Council of MOAA Chapters.
5. All Chapter officers have confirmed that they were opted-in to receive MOAA electronic newsletter during 2022.
6. The President and Legislative Liaison both registered for the new MOAA Legislative Action Center in 2022. Our Legislative Liaison has attempted to register several times, encountering issues with the website and his provider; so, we believe he was registered in 2022.

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

1. **Advocacy**

Advocacy in Action participation continued through the Zoom format in 2022. The TN Council of Chapters created four teams to call upon our Senators and Representatives; one of these teams was led by Lt Col Karon Uzzell-Baggett, USAF Retired of our Chapter. She was assisted in this effort by Lt Col Scott Findley, USAF Retired from MTC, and Mrs. Nancy Mullen of the Ft. Campbell Chapter. They called upon Congressmen John Rose, and Mark Green. One Congressman (Jim Cooper) announced his retirement and declined a meeting request. While the team was unable to meet with the representatives themselves, they did meet with each team’s legislative aide and military liaison. Chapter members were educated on the MOAA Legislative Action Center at our February 2022 luncheon and encouraged to use the platform all throughout the year. Periodic updates on Advocacy in Action activities were provided at the April – June luncheons. Relevant state and MOAA veteran legislative actions/updates were briefed at all remaining luncheons.

MTC belongs to the Tennessee Veterans (TNVET) Coalition by virtue of its participation in the TN Council of Chapters, MOAA. The TNVET “Day on the TN Hill” event was held on 2 February 2022, and MTC was

represented by the five members (pictured from left to right CDR Ted Edwards, USN Retired; COL Doug Minton, USA Retired; Lt Col Karon Uzzell-Baggett; LTC Thad Vann, USA Retired; and LTC Mike Patenaude, USA Retired). We called upon state legislators in support of TNVET proposed legislation benefiting veterans: (1) **COVID-DIC:**



Legislation to require coroners and physicians who fill out death certificates for veterans to review VA disability status to determine a possible relationship with the veteran’s service-connected disability. (2) **Electronic Voting for Active Duty:** Legislation to authorize a pilot program to test electronic voting for deployed service members. (3) **Medical Marijuana:** Legislation to allow the medical prescribing and usage for service related conditions. (4) **Restoration of a 2nd Free of Charge Disabled Veteran License Plate:** The second free plate was quietly removed in the 2015 legislative session. Veterans who qualified for the current one free plate would be restored the privilege to automatically qualify for a free second plate, as needed. TNVET made headway on the first issue, a study was approved on the second issue, the third issue never saw the light of day, and the fourth died because it would incur a fiscal cost.

Our Chapter policy of not having candidates for office speak to us in election years, coupled with the turnover experienced for State and Federal elected officials in our membership area reduced our legislative contact at meetings in 2022.

In 2022 our members continued to support Congressional Academy Boards for Representatives and Senators in our greater geographic area: CPT Reuben Dickenson, USA (Representative Green); CDR John Ohlinger, USN Retired (Representative Cooper); Col. Duffy White, USMC Retired (Representative Rose); CAPT Dale Lewelling, USN Retired; and LTC Ryan Cernoch, ARNG (Senator Blackburn). We were also represented by Capt Hal Sauer, USAF, and Lt Col Jeff Hill, USAF Retired, as Air Force Academy Liaison Officers.

2. **Community Engagement & Outreach**

Our Chapter's incoming President (Lt Col Karon Uzzell-Baggett) ushered in a new era for us in 2022 with our first ever MOAA Community Outreach Grant applications. We were fortunate in that MOAA saw value in all three applications and awarded grants for these projects.

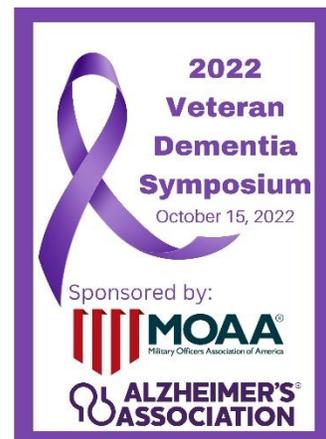
Our chapter partnered with Operation Stand Down Tennessee (OSDTN), a non-profit organization focused on helping veterans and their families in 20 counties comprising



the middle of Tennessee. The \$3000 from the MOAA Foundation allowed the Chapter to provide 300 veterans and their dependents with \$10 Walmart gift cards to use in combating food insecurity. Additionally, chapter members participated in a food bag packing event (pictured at left) which is part of OSDTN's Operation Commissary. Our group of 12 chapter members and their families packed 160 food bags which were distributed throughout the charity's service area. In total, 380 people have

been impacted directly or indirectly by the grant.

We partnered with the Alzheimer's Association of Middle Tennessee with a \$1500 grant, specifically focused on the Tennessee Alzheimer's Association Military Advisory Council (TAAMAC). It is estimated that 65 people were directly impacted when the Veteran Dementia Symposium event was held on October 15, 2022. The event was held in-person and virtually on this day to allow veterans, their families and advocates throughout Tennessee to attend. The event was recorded by the Alzheimer's Association and made available to interested individuals who wanted to review the presentation after the October date.



Our partnership with Matthew 25 began in 2022 with the purchase of computer resources to empower formerly homeless veterans in their efforts to obtain meaningful

employment. Due to delays in this process, the initiative was completed in 2023 when we provided hands-on training on resumes, interview techniques and employment practices for 22 veterans.

Scholarship continued to be a key component of our community engagement in 2022. We added Tennessee State University (TSU) to Lipscomb and Belmont Universities as recipients of \$1000 one-time scholarships for a veteran enrolled at each of the three schools. Our Chapter has three fully funded National MOAA Scholarships and continues the process of funding a fourth endowed scholarship. We also completed funding for a fully endowed Veterans Scholarship at Lipscomb University.

MTC continued to support 13 JROTC Programs and presented the MOAA Achievement Medal to cadets at 12 schools. (pictured at right CAPT Larry Cotton, USN Retired presenting the JROTC medal to a Navy Cadet at Franklin High School in April 2022.)



We support 3 ROTC programs, TSU (Air Force), and Vanderbilt University (Army & Navy). (pictured at left is CDR Ted Edwards presenting the MOAA Achievement Medal at the TSU Air Force ROTC awards program in April 2022.) In addition to presenting the MOAA Achievement Medal to cadets/midshipmen at these ROTC programs, we also provided funding for the Army-Navy field day held at Vanderbilt University in November 2022.

Our efforts to provide broader outreach information continued in March 2022 when Mr. Jeff Vaughan, a Veteran Service Officer in Williamson County, TN spoke to the Chapter. In April during our Personal Affairs month, representatives from the Veterans Administration discussed non-healthcare related benefits like vocational health and education assistance. This was followed up by Mrs. Sheila Jones a Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator in Middle TN in May 2022.

In 2022 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 \$300 each to the MOAA Foundation, USO Ft. Campbell-Nashville, Fisher House Foundation-Murfreesboro, OSDTN, Centerstone, and Matthew 25 as a means of supporting each of their individual initiatives.



Univ; Lt Col Jim Humphrey, USAF Retired; LTC Mike Patenaude; and COL Doug Minton.)

We also actively supported veterans service organizations by attending their fund- raising initiatives. In November 2022, over 20 of our Chapter members attended the OSDTN annual “Heroes Breakfast” event. (pictured left to right, CAPT Larry Cotton; CAPT Dana McLendon, USN Retired; CDR Ted Edwards; Lt Col Karon Uzzell-Baggett; Lt Col John Burns, USAF Retired; Lt Col Jeff Hill; an Army ROTC Cadet from Vanderbilt Univ; Lt Col Jim Humphrey, USAF Retired; LTC Mike Patenaude; and COL Doug Minton.)

Chapter members collected toys for the USMCR “Toys for Tots” program at our November 2022 meeting.



3. Recruiting and Retention

Our Chapter engaged in the first-ever, “Got Your 6” VetFest held in July 2022 in the Nashville, Tennessee area. The Bob Woodruff Foundation sponsored the event and



various veteran agencies were provided with tables to promote their organizations at no charge The chapter had a table with a customized sign displaying the MOAA logo; a poster depicting chapter activities in the previous six months; detailed, double-sided promotional postcards with information about MOAA’s priorities; and special shortbread cookies made with the MOAA label.

(pictured at left, Lt Col Karon Uzzell-Baggett at the MOAA booth.) The event was attended by approximately

400 people and military-affiliated both visitors received our information.

Our Chapter has continued to recruit through a combination of “word of mouth” discussions by existing members and prospective members who find out about us through MOAA Chapter locator or our website (<https://www.mtcmoaa.org>). In 2022 we attracted 15 new members, maintaining an active membership of approximately 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 we ask for dues. When guests or new officers attend our luncheons, the chapter president and membership chair personally greet the individuals and help them find a seat with members who may share a similar military service. They are also introduced to chapter members to share mutual

connections and common experiences. We meet in two locations (Nashville and Franklin) during the year to better fit the time constraints of our members who work in downtown Nashville.

We successfully added 10 new members to the MOAA National membership through the MOAA Basic model in 2022.

Our efforts to engage our members increased significantly in 2022 with the opportunities presented by the MOAA Community Grants.

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.



The variety of speakers/subjects is key to our member retention. Chief John Drake of the Metropolitan Police Department (pictured at left) was our guest speaker for our meeting at Operation Stand Down TN (OSDTN) in January 2022, and Judge Melissa Blackburn who presides over the Metropolitan Veterans Court in Nashville spoke to us in July of 2022. (Pictured at right - left to right – a member of Judge Blackburn’s staff; Capt



Bob Tuke, USMC; Lt Col Uzzell-Baggett; Judge Blackburn; and MAJ Paul Tennison, ARNG.) Both programs related to our efforts at increased community involvement by our members. Our June 2022 Zoom meeting with Major Charlynda Scales, USAFR (Featured in the MOAA May 2022 Magazine) and our October 2022 meeting with Sean Patton of Bunker Labs also proved to be of interest to a wide age range of members.



Our annual Memorial Day remembrance (pictured at left) was held at the Middle Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery with the assistance of the Cemetery staff and personnel from the Navy Operational Support Center on 28 May 2022. Our members appreciate being provided an appropriate opportunity to show their respect.

4. Leadership Succession

Our leadership succession plan took a major hit in 2022 as we lost two officers (one vice president resigned due to health issues and another resigned due to new job responsibilities) and a third position became vacant after the incumbent left to take an unfilled position with his rotary organization. Fortunately, we were able to fill one position and current chapter leadership stepped up to assume the duties of the other positions.

Following discussion of the situation, we decided that our bylaws needed to better define the duties of our Chapter officers and Board positions as well as better align with MOAA National suggested guidelines. In addition to modernizing documented procedures to accommodate remote and electronic decision-making, the bylaws now include annexes that specify primary objectives for each board member role, resources available to them, and processes to be followed. This allows rapid turnover, if necessary, and ease of successful performance for each position. We now have eight appendices (with more coming) as attachments to our bylaws. We worked on this endeavor for most of the year with the intent of seeking approval by the Chapter members for the Bylaws revisions at our January 2023 meeting.

The process of identifying potential new leaders became a priority and we focused on Chapter members who had participated in our outreach activities and had been strong participants in our meetings. The fact that our officers serve two-year terms provided an initial breather for us; however, we failed to fill the remaining vacant positions in 2022, despite asking members to step forward at the end of each luncheon meeting. This process of determining leadership succession is still a work in progress for the Chapter and we are confident we will find the right people for key vacancies. Current leaders are recognized for their dedication in keeping the chapter vibrant during executive board meetings and luncheons.

An annual impact report was created and distributed to chapter members that highlighted chapter achievements in various areas managed by current leaders. This report was also sent to MOAA Councils and Chapters.

5. Training

Lt Col Karon Uzzell-Baggett, Chapter President, participated in the Mid-Atlantic Region Council and Chapters Leaders Workshop held in Raleigh, NC on 12-13 August 2022.

The Chapter President, Membership Chair and Legislative Liaison all participated in several monthly MOAA Roundtables (via Zoom) during 2022. At the Council level, several key chapter leaders attended the in-person and virtual meetings held by the TN Council of Chapters President.

Lt Col Uzzell-Baggett and our Surviving Spouse Liaison, Mrs. Patricia Bergquist also attended the National MOAA meeting in October 2022, where the Middle TN Chapter received its 9th consecutive 5-Star LOE Award, and where Patricia Bergquist received the 2022 MOAA Surviving Spouse Excellence Award for her work with the TN Council of Chapters.



Finally, CDR Ivan Adames, USN Retired, President of the TN Council of Chapters, attended our November 2022 luncheon to observe chapter operations, meet chapter leadership and discuss important issues with members during lunch.

7. Extra Credit



CAPT Erin Stone, USN Retired, met with the MTC Board and then spoke to our Chapter's monthly meeting in July 2021. The Q & A session with the Board was every bit as valuable to us as the Q & A that took place with our members during and after her presentation to the Chapter.