



St. Petersburg Area Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 7054
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www.MOAAStPeteArea.com



DATE: 2 May 2009

SUBJECT: Nomination for "Levels of Excellence" Award, 2008

TO: Military Officers Association of America
Council and Chapter Affairs
201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2539

Reference: Appendix J, MOAA Chapter "Levels of Excellence" Award Program, Council & Chapter Policies and Procedures Guide

SECTION I—"OBJECTIVE" SCORING

"Five Star" Chapter Award, Category II: Our Chapter received this award in Category I for the year 2000, and in Category II for years 2002 through 2007.

1. All elected officers are Life members of MOAA, except for the spouse secretary.
2. One new Auxiliary Member is not a member of MOAA, (but has promised to join) and five Chapter members were dropped from Chapter membership because they refused all (and numerous) attempts to get them to join MOAA. (Our Bylaws state that all Chapter members must belong to MOAA.) That results in less than 1% of our 329 members who are not MOAA members at the end of 2008.
3. The current membership roster was provided to Council and Chapter Affairs during the year of competition. A copy is attached.
4. The Chapter submitted an updated Chapter Officer List electronically during the year of competition.
5. The Chapter has a designated "Legislative Liaison," CAPT Don Freese, USNR (Ret), with an email address of donfreesemoaa@aol.com.
6. The Chapter has a designated "Chapter email point of contact," Lt Col Larry Fernald, USAF (Ret), with an email address of Larry246MOAA@sprynet.com.
7. The Chapter sponsored over 24 events the past year, including 12 monthly luncheons, 12 Executive Committee meetings, and several funerals and memorial services.
8. The Chapter published 12 editions of *Officers Call*, a printed newsletter, and 12 electronic editions of *Officers Call*, which were sent electronically to those members who elected to receive the electronic version, and the 12 editions of *Officers Call* were also published on the Chapter website, where they can be viewed in full color. *Officers Call* won the 1st Runner-Up award in its category in 2008.

SECTION II—“SUBJECTIVE” SCORING

1. Our proactive legislative affairs program saw two of our members participate in MOAA’s “Storming the Hill” effort in 2008. Those two members are/were members of MOAA’s national staff. LtCol Fred Edwards, USMC (Ret), was a Board member, having completed his term in November of 2008, and was Chair, Councils & Chapters Committee as well as a past president of the Florida Council of Chapters. Mrs. Violet Smith is co-chair of the Auxiliary Advisory Committee and a member of the Councils & Chapters Committee. Proposed and pending legislation is reported in *Officers Call*, Legislative Update column each month. Legislative items of immediate interest are transmitted by our Military Message Center (MMC), an email link to our members having an internet capability. COL Roger Shields, USA (Ret) our past chairman of the Chapter Honor Guard, moved out of the area in 2008, and MAJ Ed Lillich, USA (Ret), replaced him as chairman. The Honor Guard serves as requested at funerals and memorial services for deceased Chapter members.
2. LTC Janice Mogan, USA (Ret), our 2nd Vice President, is charged with coordinating a recruiting and retention program. She has many helpers who visit local military units to discuss the advantages of joining MOAA and our Chapter. Our Chapter recruited a net gain of 14 members (26 new members less 12 member deaths), which is the third straight year of growth in membership. Individual annual dues notices, tailored to each individual member, addressed and postage paid return envelopes, along with detailed telephone follow-up, helped with this increase. Another big factor was the speakers we were able to secure for our monthly luncheons, which brought in more members and guests.
3. All 26 new members were recruited through the MOAA “Give Me 10” program and all but one (to date) has joined or renewed his/her MOAA dues. Chapter recruiting was improved by the Chapter sponsored Help Our Troops (HOT) program whereby the Chapter collects needed items and sends them to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite the HOT program being shut down for a good part of the year while we attempted to find someone to head that effort, by the end of 2008, we had sent over 150 boxes, for a program total of nearly 500 boxes of “goodies” to the troops and collected donations of \$3,050. The Chapter has “adopted” an Air Force Forward Air Control Unit in Afghanistan, with three detachments, as well as an Army unit and a Marine unit in Iraq as our recipients. We are in email contact with these units to ascertain just what it is that they need that we might be able to provide. This HOT program and the publicity that it has generated has been a big factor in recruiting and just making ourselves known to the retired community.
4. Mrs. Violet Smith is our Personal Affairs Chairperson. She has established procedures which trigger an immediate reaction when a member’s death is known. Her first action is to telephone the surviving spouse or family to express condolences and to ascertain the wishes of the surviving family members. She offers to furnish the services of the Honor Guard, a uniformed group of members who are available to render honors, present the colors to the widow and offer assistance in sorting out actions needed to obtain benefits. The Chapter President then sends a condolence letter to the surviving spouse or family offering continuing assistance and informing the surviving spouse that the Executive Committee has

extended the surviving spouse's Chapter membership until 31 December of the coming year and that the EC will pay the MOAA dues for the coming year if necessary. The Chapter lost 12 members and 3 spouses in 2008. Of those 12 members, 7 were regular members and all 7 were Life members of MOAA.

5. Our Chapter is, and has been for many years, a member of the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC). Four of our members have held prior leadership positions in the FCOC, including: LtCol Fred Edwards, USMC (Ret), FCOC President for two years; COL Roger Shields, USA (Ret), FCOC Finance Committee Chair for two years as well as the FCOC Secretary for many years; CAPT Tom Harrow, USN (Ret), FCOC Treasurer for two years; and CAPT Don Freese, USNR (Ret), FCOC Treasurer for one and a half years. As of May, 2008, Chapter members filled two FCOC positions: CAPT Don Freese, USN (Ret), Vice President, and Lt Col Larry Fernald, USAF (Ret), West Central Area Vice President. Additionally, at the last FCOC state convention, our Chapter had the highest number of participants outside of the host chapter, which has been the case for many of the past conventions.
6. Our JROTC Program, chaired by MAJ Ed Lillich, USA (Ret), serves three public high schools and Admiral Farragut Academy in our local area. Cadets were awarded medals, certificates, and ribbons by our Chapter for various awards won. The annual trip by selected cadets to the Florida JROTC Leadership Conference was sponsored and financed by our Chapter, as we do each year. The Chapter participated in judging annual drill ceremonies and provided funds to purchase trophies to present to the winners. The Admiral Farragut Color Guard paraded the colors at our annual installation banquet in January 2008 (and 2009).
7. The MOAA National Scholarship initiatives are funded in part by contributions from our Chapter members each year. Chapter members contributed \$4,917 in 2008 for the last year of MOAA's \$5,000 for five years (5 x 5) Program. Contributors to the program are listed each month in our monthly newsletter, *Officers Call*. Our Scholarship was endowed by MOAA. As a result of the generous donations from our members, we completed our first Designated Scholarship Program six months ahead of schedule, and started a second one.
8. Although most of our members are fully retired, those who are not retired are guided to resources available locally and are advised of MOAA national's programs. Our TOPS program officer is COL Ron Merritt, USA (Ret).
9. The Chapter initiated an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESG&R) program in 2006 chaired by CAPT Donald R. Freese, USN (Ret) a retired Reservist. Chapter members LCDR William M. (Matt) Poage, USN; LT Brian Clark, USN; and Maj Marc D. Freese, USMC, all drilling Reservists, are developing contacts with reserve units and commands to identify their ESG&R requirements.
10. Civic activities have brought honors to many of our members. Maj Gen Earl G. Peck, USAF (Ret); COL George Brown, USA (Ret); and Col William Clark, USAF (Ret), have been previously awarded Keys to the City by the Mayor of St Petersburg in impressive ceremonies. Mrs. Violet Smith was also so honored in Year 2006. LCDR Hazel McGrath, USN (Ret), was honored for her 60 years of volunteer service to our local Red Cross. Asa Myers has been recognized for her long term service to All Children's Hospital in St Petersburg, while the VA Hospital has recognized the many hours of volunteer service by Anne Isley. Our contact with MacDill AFB consists of monthly hospital advisory board meetings attended by Violet Smith, who reports to

our Executive Committee at each monthly business meeting. The MacDill Hospital Commander, an Honorary member of our Chapter, annually presents a most interesting discussion at one of our monthly luncheons.

11. LtCol Fred Edwards, USMC (Ret), was inducted into the St. Petersburg Senior Hall of Fame in 2007 at a ceremony officiated by the Mayor of St. Petersburg and awarded a Key to the City. Fred follows a long line of distinguished Chapter members who have been inducted into the Senior Hall of Fame; they are noted in paragraph 10.
12. To enhance membership, our "Sunshine Sally," CWO4 Basil Burrell, USCG (Ret), (who gets irate when we call him "Sunshine Sally") sends Chapter birthday cards to every member on his/her birthday. We have been told many times that our card is the only card some members receive.
13. MAJ Ed Lillich, USA (Ret) and LtCol Fred Edwards, USMC (Ret) are cofounders of the Veterans Liaison Council of Pinellas County Honor Guard. The Honor Guard provides complete Honor Guard services including rifle volleys and taps to any veteran of any rank of all five armed services. Services are available upon request by any military family and or funeral home in or out of Pinellas County. The Honor Guard averages over 100 services per year. Several Chapter members volunteer their time to honor all veterans! While LtCol Edwards activities in the Honor Guard are limited, MAJ Lillich heads that effort today. Additionally, MAJ Lillich is the Chapter representative to the Pinellas County Veterans Liaison Council.
14. To meet the needs of some of our infirm members who are unable to attend meetings or to support the Chapter, but who have contributed to the Chapter's success in the past, the Executive Committee created an "Inactive" category of members. Those members deemed to fit in this category are no longer included as members, but still receive the Chapter newsletter, *Officers Call*, each month.

SECTION III – INTERNET PRESENCE

Chapter Website: www.MOAAStPeteArea.com

1. Our Chapter maintains a website, which has been specifically tailored to the needs of Chapter members as well as those new to the area looking for a local Chapter. Website pages are clear and concise, to meet the needs of our members with limited eyesight or eyesight problems. There are important links to outside resources which may be needed in the course of one's retirement. While not overly "flashy," the website gets the message across and is easy to find through Google or other search engine.

Military Message Center (MMC)

2. The MMC is a web based communication system, set up as a Google Group, whereby members of the Chapter are alerted to important events or events of interest to the military community. Each member of the Chapter is asked to provide his or her email address to the Chapter as part of the annual dues drive, and, at that time, is given the option of participating in the MMC or not. When an important announcement is available, or when a Chapter officer deems an event

worthy of sending to the Chapter members, it is sent to the Chapter Webmanager, who sends it out via the Google Group. One click of the send button by the Webmanager will send a message to all members who are signed up for the MMC. The MMC won a "Unique Communications" Award for 2007 (awarded in 2008).

3. By using Google Groups, Chapter members email addresses are not viewable to the public. That ensures that the Chapter does not publish members email addresses where they may be picked up for spam purposes. Examples of messages sent out over the MMC include:
 - Funeral announcements for deceased members
 - Legislative updates and calls-to-action
 - Notification that the latest edition of the Chapter newsletter is now available on the Chapter website
 - Notification and reminders of upcoming meetings and speakers

The MMC is a no-cost, very little effort, and very effective method to get the word out to Chapter members.

SECTION IV – CONCLUSION

In summary we have no doubt that we are a very vibrant and vital Chapter which serves the community and our members through many activities and modes of communications.

To further support a subjective rating of **5 Star Chapter**, our award-winning 2008 Directory is enclosed. It provides far more than just member names and addresses, and was awarded a "Unique Communications" Award for 2008 (awarded in 2009).

Also enclosed:

- Excel Spreadsheet of Current Roster that was provided to MOAA national
- Recruiting Application
- Sample President's Condolence Letter
- Sample Birthday Card
- 2008 Installation Program Book
- 2008 Memorial Service Program Book

Respectfully submitted,

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