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Re: Recommendation Letter for Operation Appreciation / Beth Waters, President

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Operation Appreciation / Beth Waters, President.

I was first introduced to Operation Appreciation and Beth Waters in the Spring of 2015 when I was assigned as the Chief of the Military Family Support Branch (MFSB), Georgia Army National Guard. Our mission was to provide support, resources, and employment opportunities to all military Families in Georgia. The mission of Operation Appreciation was similar easily nested with our events and resources, and our office had already developed a relationship before my assignment. It was an easy relationship sustain and work alongside each other with. I retired in Aug, 2019 and the relationship is still ongoing and has proven to be vital to our Service Members and their Families.

I quickly learned that Beth Waters doesn't wait around for someone to ask for assistance. She does the research to see where needs are and then offers assistance if it fits within her scope of work. If the issue doesn't fit, then she finds additional resources that can assist.

Below are some of the resources she has provided that I am directly aware of during my tenure in the MFSB:

1. Secured donation from Ed Voyles Chevrolet for parts and labor to repair a Service Members vehicle.

A Soldier reached out to our office and indicated that his truck's transmission was shot and he had no transportation to work. The MFSB staff reached out to our resources and asked for a connection to a local repair shop that could assist. Operation Appreciation provided a contact. After Mrs. Waters called Ed Voyles Chevrolet here in Marietta GA, and explained the situation, they offered to look at the repairs and then ended up providing the transmission repair free of charge to the Soldier, due to their relationship with Operation Appreciation.

2. Connected MFSB with St Michael's Mission.

This is a classic example of just professional networking – St Michael's Mission, another local nonprofit who was looking to provide assistance to military Families of deployed Service Members. Through our connection with Operation Appreciation, Mrs. Waters connected our organizations and now St Michael's Mission donates bikes to our Christmas Assistance Program each year.

3. Donated food for the 248th MED CO departure ceremony. During the planning for the 248th Medical Company's departure ceremony for their deployment to the middle east in 2018, Operation Appreciation provided food for the Soldiers and Families at their departure ceremony prior to them leaving to Texas for Mobilization training and deploying overseas.

This allowed the unit to provide food to Families when there was no military funding allowed.

4. Secured donations of bounce houses & Girl Scout face painters to support JFHQ & 78th ATC Family Day.

On more than one occasion Operation Appreciation has provided donations from local businesses and other organizations to assist in military Family Day events. In 2019, Operation Appreciation coordinated a blowup bounce house, soft drinks and bottled water, and had a local Girl Scout troop that provided face painting to military children to two of our units assigned to Clay National Guard center on Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta GA.

5. Provided flights, rental car and housing for a Soldier from Michigan on Emergency leave. This is the most complicated, and yet one of the most needed times for organization like Operation Appreciation. A Soldier from out of state that volunteered and was assigned to a GA National Guard unit while deployed to Iraq, was notified that his parents were injured in a house fire. The Soldier took Emergency Leave and was flown home to Michigan. Due to the extent of the fire the Soldier had no place to stay. His parents were in a hospital out of town and he had no transportation to get to them. By communicating with his unit overseas, Operation Appreciation was able to assist the Soldier with hotels and a rental car in order to allow him the peace of mind to care for his parent and take care of the issues regarding their destroyed home while he was home on leave.

6. During a staff conference, in the fall of 2018, Operation Appreciation provided a thorough briefing and an onsite tour of their facilities to the entire MFSB staff. Mrs. Waters provided the each of the five staff sections within MFSB an opportunity to get first hand information of the resources available to Service Members and Families and how the two organizations could support each other to better help families.

As a government agency, the MFSB is not allowed to ask for or seek out donations. Multiple times, Operation Appreciation has provided a contact that was willing to provide donations or Operation Appreciation provided the resources, the food or whatever was vital to make the event a success.

Operation Appreciation has been recognized by local leaders as well as our Adjutant Generals that Mrs. Waters has worked with over the years. Operation Appreciation is a dedicated resource that we, as an organization within the military, uses regularly for simply a point of contact, or to help provide needed resources due to traumatic issues with military Families. It is a needed and vital resource that we rely on regularly.

Feel free to call or email if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Lipper". The signature is stylized and includes a double dot at the end.

Michael Lipper, LTC (R)
Georgia Army National Guard