

PUBLIUS PUBLICATIONS

AVM Board Members welcome MOHS AFJROTC program, cadets...

By Evelyn Candor@publius.publications.com 10:15 a.m. December 11, 2017

Mount Olive - The setting at Mount Olive High School has become a little more patriotic these days now that they have acquired their very own Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFJROTC) program. The program is focused on building citizens of character and is good for anyone regardless of their future intentions. This was an excellent acquisition for not only Mount Olive's young adults who may be considering a military career, but for anyone who is interested in actively learning leadership skills and bolstering their confidence for the future.

Selection process

MOHS's prominence in robotics and engineering played a major role in selecting which branch of service would best parlay with their existing academic curriculum. After an extensive review and deliberation, the Mount Olive Board of Education concluded that the Air Force JROTC would be a perfect fit. The next challenge was to receive acceptance and begin their comprehensive search for a qualified instructor.

Three years later, the application was approved and an inspiring instructor was found.

The newly acquired program will be led by Chief Master Sgt. Robert Bedell, a 29 year decorated airman who held the 30th Space Wing Command Chief position at Vandenberg Air Force Base; the west coast space hub that delivered payloads into orbit and tested aircraft. Bedell has earned several accommodations for excellence and service throughout his military career. In addition to his impeccable military background, Bedell is ready to share his technical expertise and real life experience in the field of aerospace technology, rocketry and space flight with Mount Olive's advanced young adults.

Air Force JROTC program

The structured course not only provides long-lasting benefits to our students, but to the community of which they live. The program is being offered as an elective course to students from ninth to twelfth grade. Students who are enrolled in the program are referred to as cadets and are introduced to a military developmental program that will improve their self-confidence, character, discipline and leadership skillsets. Cadets are regularly exposed to physical fitness training, drill instructions and community service, as well as required to wear their issued uniforms once a week .

The JROTC, program is completely voluntary. Students who elect to take the course are in no way obligated to serve in the military after graduation. However, it is estimated that 30 to 50 percent of the JROTC cadets chose to enlist in one of the military branches or select a college affiliated with the ROTC program. If the students complete two years of JROTC training and join the U.S. Air Force, they are rewarded the rank of E-2 after basic training; whereby a typical E-2 promotion is six months. If the student completes three years of training, they will earn the rank of E-3 which usually takes 16 months to earn.

Community Service Hours

As part of the curriculum, cadets are required to fulfill 150 hours of community service per year. This mandate was the impetus that caused Mount Olive School Superintendent, Dr. Larrie Reynolds, to recognize the ongoing work at the All Veterans Memorial and the potential volunteer opportunities for the cadets. On August 3, 2017, Reynolds introduced Bedell to Charlie Uhrmann, AVM Originator to discuss future projects and program opportunities. “Partnering with Charlie Uhrmann and the All Veterans Memorial is a perfect fit for our program and our cadets. Not only does it give the cadets a tangible project to serve and give back to their local community, but it also lines up perfectly with our patriotic ethos, while honoring our most deserving veterans”, Bedell explained.

It took no time at all for Bedell and the cadets to lend the AVM a helping hand, as they prepared the groundwork for the first phase of the newest addition to the park; the Veterans Remembrance Wall. From leveling the ground and spreading stone dust to setting 60lbs rocks, the group has committed to seeing the project to completion and beyond. “If I could bottle up all their [cadet’s] positive energy, respect and comradery and sell it on the free market, I would be the richest person in the world” Uhrmann said.

“The Board of Education and Dr. Reynolds made an excellent decision. We are excited to see the AFJROTC program come to Mount Olive. We believe the benefit of having military presence in our high school will provide our community with an increased sense of patriotism. We have been the recipients of our schools’ goodwill and participation for more than a decade now. Having access to an energetic group of willing and able young adults that share a similar mindset is truly a God send. We are extremely grateful for Dr. Reynolds, the Mount Olive Board of Education and Bedell’s continued support”, Uhrmann said.

Students who are interested in taking the AFJROTC class next year should request the class when they complete their schedule request for the 2018-2019 school year this winter; as with any elective course, students must consider their academic requirements. Students, who would like to volunteer at the AVM, may do so by emailing info@allveteransmemorial.org or calling (908) 684-0057. Volunteer hours will be recorded and submitted to the following accredited volunteer organizations such as Point of Light, Presidential Volunteerism Award and the AVM Patriotism Award.