



# The Volusia Officers Call

West Volusia MOAA Chapter, INC. (WVMC)  
An Affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America



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### MOAA's Mission

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or NOAA and their surviving spouses.

### President's Perspective—



We closed out 2023 with an "open" agenda meeting. Our intent was to invite and encourage member participation. Each Board member presented a brief biography and shared our duties and responsibilities as relates to the Chapter. Our treasurer, Maj Pete Durnell, provided us with a positive financial report. As a result of your generosity the Chapter voted to sponsor a military family this Christmas. We are collaborating with our local National Guard Unit to identify a deserving member for this gift. With the leadership of CW4 Thomas Jackson and other Board members, we selected The Barracks of Hope, a new shelter for homeless Veterans, as our designated Charitable Donation for 2024. The administrator, Mr. Buck James, has invited our Chapter to tour the facility. We will let you know the date and time when it is coordinated. And, thanks to the efforts of LTC Laura Wickett the Chapter is also adding T-Dewitt High School, in Pierson, to our JROTC Scholarship program. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of December we supported the Salvation Army with Bell Ringing at the South DeLand Publix. Captain Camillo Rojas, West Volusia Corps Commander, shared that \$349.23 was donated by the shoppers. He was grateful for the support. These are just a few examples of what we are currently doing in our community. Looking forward to 2024, our January speaker is LTC Steve Bond, Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) VP, and incoming President. I would ask everyone who can to attend the member lunch on January the 3<sup>rd</sup>. On 26-27 January The Annual FCoC Leadership Seminar will take place at the Rosen Center in Orlando; you are welcome to participate. Also, please plan to get involved with our Chapter

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**MOAA Take Action Center -**

<http://takeaction.moaa.org>

**Legislative -****MOAA's 2024 Legislative Priorities for the 118th Congress**

As the legislative slate is wiped clean for the 118th Congress in 2024, your support becomes even more vital to achieving MOAA's advocacy objectives.

MOAA needs your help to keep momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans and had the support of two-thirds of Congress at the end of last session. They also need your help on behalf of new objectives and emergent issues, often via immediate action to keep up with the stop-and-go pace of legislation.

Here is a list of MOAA's priorities, in support of the 50th anniversary of our all-volunteer force and to address the challenges facing our uniformed community. Note: MOAA's advocacy team remains active on many other issues not listed here; MOAA priorities will be shaped throughout the year depending on concurrent successes or emerging issues. Additionally, we share many interests with The Military Coalition and other stakeholder groups, and leverage those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

- Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits
- Military Housing
- Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees
- Health Care and Benefits for Veterans
- Service Families
- Survivors
- Guard and Reserve

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**Last Meeting (6 DEC 2023) -**

President, MAJ Raul Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 1148 hours.

Mrs. Rutha Corley gave the invocation followed by The Pledge of Allegiance.

MAJ Raul Gonzalez welcomed our members and guest: Mrs. Marisa Connelly.

MAJ Gonzalez informed the members that this is an informal meeting, with the intent for the Board members to introduce themselves and explain what they do. "I will also ask the members to tell us a little about why they are part of the WVMC." Please Enjoy your meal.

Lunch was served: Beef Brisket Sandwich

MAJ Gonzalez asked Maj Curt Voelbel that the 50/50 drawings be done at this time. Followed by the members' free lunch drawing.

MAJ Shirley Burtnett won the free lunch for the 3 JAN 2024 meeting/luncheon.

MAJ Gonzalez explained the duties of the President and the role of the Chapter in the community. He additionally shared a special quote and his love for this country and to continue the mission of the WVMC. MAJ Gonzalez presented the Chapter with the 50-year anniversary certificate and the wall plaque with the names of past presidents and emphasized the importance of updating each. Additionally, he shared a short video of the upcoming FCOC convention in May 2024.

MAJ Gonzalez stressed the importance of our chapter being involved in the community and the other agencies we have helped, which help veterans, such as Family Renew. The chapter recently received a thank you letter from them for the donation they received.

At this time, MAJ Gonzalez called upon the attending officers to share about themselves with the membership: LTC Laura Wickett, Maj

Pete Durnell, Col Jim Winter, MAJ Shirley Burtnett, Maj Curt Voelbel, LTC Mike Galaty, and COL Jack Burtnett.

**MAJ Gonzalez called for reports:**

Secretary's Report: LtCol Twila Davis- excused

Treasurer's Report: Maj Pete Durnell reported the checking and savings account balance account balance as of 30 NOV 2023 is \$ 7,533.47 and \$2714.00 of the total is earmarked for the ROTC Scholarships. Treasurers report is given for informational purpose and is subject to audit.

MAJ Gonzalez asked for a motion to support the ADA Army National guard unit in Deland with a contribution of \$200 for a needy family. A motion was made to raise the amount to \$500. It was seconded and during the discussion it was suggested that maybe we could help two families, \$250 each. After limited discussion, the motion passed unanimously. MAJ Gonzalez stated he would reach out to the Unit Commander and First Sergeant to identify two worthy families.

**Directors and Committee Reports:**

LTC Laura Wickett -1<sup>st</sup> VP – nothing to report.

2nd VP- CAPT Bonner – excused.

Maj Mick Cotten -Director- excused.

Col Jim Winter -Director –nothing to report.

MAJ Shirley Burtnett -Director – nothing to report.

LTC Laura Wickett- Scholarship Chair – nothing to report.

LTC Mike Galaty -Legislative Chair –nothing to report.

(Continued on page 4)

**Last Meeting - continued from page 3**

Maj Curt Voelbel – Chief of Staff and Membership Chair– reported we have 57 current members. Our goal is 58. Keep recruiting.

CW4 Thomas Jackson - Community Relations – excused.

Past President - 1LT Ray Parker - excused.

LtCol Chris Hoffmann - Chaplain—excused.

COL Jack Burtnett – Editor - nothing to report.

Ms. Lisa Hightower – Surviving Spouse Liaison - excused.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

MAJ Gonzalez reminded everyone of the upcoming Halifax Chapter Holiday Party on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

Maj Peter Durnell gave a short briefing on the status of the FCOC convention and stressed the need for more members to volunteer to help at the convention.

FCOC Florida Leadership Training is 26-27 January in Orlando.

MAJ Gonzalez read “An American Creed” by William Tyler Page, 1917 and presented a copy to COL (R) Jim Winter, and LTC (R) Laura Wickett.

Executive Board Meeting will be held on 13 December 2023, 1000 hours at the Debary Country Club. Members are welcome to attend.

Our next luncheon meeting will be 3 JAN 2024. MAJ Gonzalez thanked everyone for attending this 4th meeting of the 2023-2024 cycle. He asked the members to remember to talk us up and invite other potential members and guests.

MAJ (R) Pam Ring offered up in prayer Harry Brandt. He has fractured his back.

Meeting adjourned at 1325 hours.

*LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET  
Secretary*

**Membership -**

We welcome our newest and 57<sup>th</sup> member Maj Elizabeth May, USA (RET). However, our strength will certainly decrease by year end as a handful of current members have **FAILED** to pay their annual dues and will be dropped from our roster! Mick Cotten has indicated that he will be moving and as one of our most tenured members, will be greatly missed. Mick’s historical insight has been invaluable. We also know that past President Ray Parker has elected to discontinue his membership for personal reasons. We thank Ray for his leadership and the changes he instituted that not only enhanced our chapter but also, along with his wife Claudia, made us a more professional organization.

If you are not a current dues paying member of MOAA National, we encourage you to join by going to the MOAA Website - <https://www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa/> . Information on Premium and Life membership is described. When on the website, scroll down to join. **Remember:** our membership participation at the National level affects our scoring for MOAA awards, including cash awards.

*Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET  
Membership*

**Guest Speaker's Bio -**

STEPHEN J. (Steve) BOND  
Colonel, United States Army, RET  
Melbourne, FL / 321-831-7572

Steve is a retired Colonel and a 29-year veteran of the United States Army. He is currently the Senior Vice President of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Florida Council and a Past President of the MOAA Cape Canaveral Chapter (MOAACC). He was initially commissioned as a Second Lieutenant through the ROTC program. He joined the Army for adventure and to travel around the world--He accomplished that goal!

Over his military career, Steve led and commanded units from the Lieutenant (O-1) level as an Airborne Infantry Platoon Leader with 40 soldiers assigned, to the Colonel (O-6) level leading over 450+ assigned soldiers. He also served in key staff positions in Airborne, Infantry, Military Intelligence, Special Operations, and Joint Commands. Steve is a veteran of combat operations in Panama (1989-90) and Saudi Arabia/Kuwait (1990-91), as well as humanitarian/peacekeeping operations in St. Croix (1989), and Haiti (1994). He was assigned to posts across the United States, and in Italy, Germany and Japan. He is a Military Jumpmaster-Master Parachutist, and Ranger qualified.

After Steve retired from the Army, he worked for one of the largest Defense-Aerospace Companies in the US as a Director of Business Development in Melbourne, FL from 2004-08, and again from 2009-17. There he worked closely with military customers and provided advice to the program and engineering teams developing equipment and systems for the military.

From February 2008 to March 2009, Steve served in a US Government Senior Executive Service (SES) Flag/General Officer-position as the Director of the Intelligence Transition Team and Senior US Intelligence Advisor to the Iraqi Ministries of Defense (MOD), Interior (MOI), and Counter-Terrorist Force while assigned to the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I), Multi-National Force -Iraq (MNF-I) during Operation Iraqi Freedom in

what was known as "The Surge". There he led a 130-member team of US Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Government and Contract Civilians, and worked with National Intelligence Agencies and key coalition partners to advise and assist Iraqi Intelligence organizations to improve their performance and capabilities and expedite the departure of US Forces from Iraq.

He holds a master's degree in history from the University of Kansas, and a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Utah. His military education includes the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College. His military awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, among others. For his civilian service in Iraq, he was awarded the Department of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Medal and the Global War on Terror Civilian Service Medal.

Steve lives in Melbourne and enjoys the Florida weather by running, biking, and swimming. He also enjoys travelling for snow skiing in the winter.

## NEVER STOP SERVING®

### ***Presidents Perspective—continued from page 1***

as we close in on the 12-15 May, FCoC Convention at the Shores Resort & Spa. We are the host chapter, and I need your participation. My New Year wish is to have greater participation from you in all our activities.

Finally, congratulations to Chaplain Chris Hoffman on the 36<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of his ordination. And, in case you were not aware, the National Guard celebrated its 387<sup>th</sup> Birthday on December 13th! Thanks to all our Army and Air Guard personnel. *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

MAJ Raul Gonzalez, FLARNG, RET  
President



**Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army**

Many thanks for those volunteers who came out to support the Salvation Army by ringing bells in front of the Publix grocery market on the corner of Woodland Ave. and Orange Camp Rd. Fortunately the weather was mild on Thursday 14 December; we rang bells from 1000 hours until 1800 hours.

Bell ringers were Raul and Frances Gonzalez, Jack and Shirley Burtnett, and Lisa Hightower.



Jack and Shirley thanking a generous donor.

Frances smiling and ringing the bell.



Raul ringing up business

**From the Chief of Staff -**

As you are aware, we are hosting the Florida Council of Chapters meeting in Daytona Beach Shores, May 12-14, 2024. As such, we will need volunteers to help make this a memorable event that will recognize our chapter. See Pete Durnell or Raul Gonzalez to sign up.

Remember to stop by the table at our luncheon to purchase a bunch of potential winning 50-50 tickets @ 3 for a dollar. Somebody has to win!

Sample Tee Shirts and Hat with our local chapter Logo will be on display for you to purchase or order. If you prefer, you can bring your own shirt and have our logo embroidered on it for a very reasonable price.

**Veterans Causes**

Barracks of Hope in Daytona provides transitional housing for up to 9 months to male and female veterans who have struggled with homelessness, addiction, and mental health. Single occupancy rooms are provided, along with mental health counseling, case management, and three meals per day. You can help by bringing to each luncheon a quart size Zip “hygiene bag” filled with toothpaste, brush, shampoo, soap, deodorant, etc.

Additionally, we will collect unexpired Pantry items for The West Volusia Salvation Army.

At our luncheon, cash donations may be dropped in the buckets at the door for Veteran’s Causes and JR ROTC Scholarships.

*Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET  
Chief of Staff*



## The Chaplain's Corner -



### Starting Afresh in 2024

At the beginning of any year people might ask you, "Are you making any New Year's resolutions?" I know that many people do that, often the typical ones of losing weight and exercising more are made and quickly broken. I believe that occurs because those resolutions have not been planned for. If you haven't bought a gym membership you probably won't do any exercise. If you have not decided on a proven weight loss program good intentions won't be enough to keep you going.

So, perhaps the strategy to employ this year is, first to be aware of what needs to change in your world. Be alert for neighbors whose homes seem to be deteriorating. Are there people you used to see, but not know they can't get out. Make a plan to see how they are doing and then knock on their door. Then, look for ways to improve your life and the lives of others with the goal of making the world a better place. These aren't quick fixes or resolutions that will be forgotten by February.

Another way we can make a difference in our world is by helping the next generation. I remember a couple of years ago there was the opportunity to teach in a public school about civics and the role of the military. I don't know if that is still an option, but if it is, that would be another way to make our world better. Perhaps we can also use our military experience with young cadets just beginning their journey.

I know all of us struggle to find time to add anything more to our crazy schedule, but perhaps being attentive and then just doing one thing to make the world a better place would be a great way to start out 2024.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET  
Chaplain*

## Legislative—continued from page 2

To keep connected, ensure you are signed up for The MOAA Newsletter and register as an advocate at our Legislative Action Center. It's Easy: Using your smart phone and the QR code below you can send calls to action to your elected officials. Simply hover your camera lens over the QR code. A link to the website will appear on your screen. Tap the link to open Legislative Action Center Site. You will see a form to fill out. Then tap "Submit".

SCAN HERE:



Do Your Part - TAKE ACTION - BE AN ADVOCATE

*LTC Michael Galaty Jr, USA, RET  
Legislative*



The next meeting, 3 Jan, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be quesadilla—grilled chicken, melted cheese, peppers, and onions in a grilled tortilla with salsa and sour cream. There will also be a dessert. The lunch cost is \$24 per meal. We ask that you either pay by check or with cash (exact change helps) at the door. This month our guest speaker will be COL Steve Bond, USA, RET, the incoming president of MOAA's Florida Council of Chapters. Col Bond's bio is on page 5.

Please bring your unexpired pantry items for the Salvation Army and your donation of toiletries for Barracks of Hope.

**Upcoming Meeting: 3 JAN 2024**  
**Following Meeting: 7 FEB 2024**  
**Upcoming Board Meeting: 10 JAN 2024**

Meetings are held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. Social hour starts at 1100 hrs., lunch served at 1130 followed by an interesting guest speaker, then a short business meeting.



# THE WEST VOLUSIA MOAA CHAPTER (FL30)



*FOR THE 2024  
FCoC 47TH ANNUAL  
CONVENTION*



**May 12-15, 2024 at  
The Shores Resort & Spa  
Daytona Beach, Florida**

**"CAMARADERIE WITH A PURPOSE"**







The Volusia Officers Call  
West Volusia MOAA Chapter, INC.  
An Affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America



Items to Note -

**Free Meals**

Those attendees who win a free lunch from the "ticket drawing" will only be able to claim their free lunch at the NEXT meeting.

If you are receiving this via U.S. Postal delivery and if you have email, we can get the VOC to you more quickly and at less expense to WVMC. Please let the editor know your email by contacting him at volusiaofficerscall@gmail.com

*Notice: WVMC does not endorse any of the paid advertisers.*

Check out OUR website at [www.moaafl.org/Chapters/VolusiaMOAA](http://www.moaafl.org/Chapters/VolusiaMOAA) It has a lot of information and links to useful information for all vets. The website gives guidance about how prospective members can join MOAA and WVMC.

**National MOAA and the West Volusia MOAA Chapter are nonpartisan organizations.**

New name tags reflecting the name change for our organization are available from LTC Laura Wickett at the monthly meetings or by contacting her at: lrwickett52@gmail.com. The cost is \$15.



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