



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—

Our first meeting of the 2023-2024 cycle is on September 6, 2023, at The DeBary Country Club. Maj Curt Voelbel has already issued the RSVP, and I will follow-up with a postcard reminder. I thank everyone for working together to achieve our goals. For the first time, with your help, we were able to make two \$1,000.00 JROTC Scholarship awards.

We also identified Veteran Services Organizations (VSO's) that we will partner with to better assist our veteran community. Your Board decided to support Barracks of Hope in Daytona Beach. This transitional housing program provides mental health counselling, case management, and three meals per day for homeless veterans. We are also supporting Project Vet Relief that provides emergency assistance to active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. By pooling our resources, we can better meet the needs of our veteran community. More on these initiatives soon.

Now, this year's focus is on the Florida Council of Chapters Annual Convention in May hosted by your Chapter. You will meet the Planning Committee in September. It is chaired by Major Pete Durnell, and he is going to need your assistance in accomplishing this mission. I am asking you to volunteer and demonstrate our ability to make this a memorable Convention. We plan to make it innovative, imaginative, and original. So, join me as we tap into the creative potential of the WVMC. See you at the September lunch meeting.

MAJ Raul Gonzalez, FLARNG, RET
President

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MOAA Take Action Center -<http://takeaction.moaa.org>**Legislative -**

Our Lawmakers returned from their August recess September 4, 2023 So this is a good time to contact our representatives about issues important to us and MOAA's advocacy mission.

Following is a list of MOAA's top legislative priorities: Note: MOAA's advocacy team remains active on many other issues not listed here; MOAA's priorities will be shaped throughout the year depending on concurrent successes or emerging issues that warrant an all-hands approach.

Compensation and service-earned benefits: ensuring pay raises, housing allowances, and retirement benefits for servicemembers and veterans are competitive and fair.

Military housing: improving the quality and oversight of privatized housing and addressing environmental hazards.

Health care for currently serving and retirees: protecting the value and access of the military health care benefit, including pharmacy copays, coverage gaps, and mental health care.

Health care and benefits for veterans: sustaining the Veterans Health Administration missions and services, reforming the presumptive process for toxic exposures, and achieving concurrent receipt of retirement pay and disability pay.

Service families: protecting family support programs, such as housing, PCS, child care, youth programs, and financial counseling.

Survivors: improving survivors' benefits, such as eliminating the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset and expanding concurrent receipt eligibility.

Guard and Reserve: achieving equity of benefits, protections, and administrative support for Guard/Reserve members consistent with their active-duty counterparts.

(Continued on page 6)

Last Meeting (3 MAY 2023) -

President, MAJ Raul Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 1140 hours.

Attendance: 32 paid and 3 who came for meeting but not lunch

CH (Fr) LtCol Chris Hoffmann gave the invocation followed by The Pledge of Allegiance.

MAJ Gonzalez welcomed our members and guests: MAJ Lorraine Holland USA (Ret) Central Florida Area Vice President, and Pat Green, Chair, Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, MOAA National.

Lunch was served: Smoked beef brisket sandwich with BBQ sauce, coleslaw, and ice cream with caramel sauce for dessert

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

MAJ Pam Ring won the free lunch for the 6 SEP 2023 meeting/luncheon.

MAJ Gonzalez then handed out rose bouquets to all the mothers in the room in honor of Mother's Day.

MAJ Gonzalez introduced MAJ Lorraine Holland FCoC Area VP, who thanked the members for supporting our chapter president, community activities, and the local JROTC programs. Lorraine will be assisting us with our planning for next year's hosting of the FCoC Annual Convention.

MAJ Holland introduced our guest speaker. Pat Green, who participated in Advocacy in Action in Washington, DC the previous week. This is an annual event, hosted by MOAA National, for MOAA members from every state to come and meet with their Senators and Representatives to make them aware of legislative priorities on

behalf of military service members, their families, and veterans. The event was previously called Storming the Hill. On the first day, 190 participants were given a study packet, a MOAA tote bag, calling cards and all materials necessary to share with legislators. They were given their assignments on who to visit. The next day, the group visited their assigned legislators to make them aware of MOAA's three priority issues and ask for their support.

1. Reverse the cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network.
2. Pay Full Housing Costs for Servicemembers, not the current 95%.
3. Support the All-Volunteer Force.

The final day was a recap of events. They had acquired an additional 35 sponsors for HR 2537 due to their visits. At the final dinner, Rep Bacon (Nebraska) gave an uplifting speech in support of our military.

OLD BUSINESS:

President Raul Gonzalez asked MAJ Lorraine Holland to install the Chapter's Elected Officers and introduce the appointed members who will serve as the WVMC, INC leaders for 2023-2024. MAJ Holland announced the following:

President MAJ Raul Gonzalez, 1st Vice President LTC Laura Wickett, 2nd Vice President -CAPT Suzanne Bonner, Secretary LtCol Twila Davis, Treasurer Maj Pete Durnell, Director Col Jim Winter, Director Maj Mick Cotten, Director MAJ Shirley Burtnett.

MAJ Holland proceeded to install the new officers.

MAJ Holland then announced and recognized the appointed officers: Chaplain LtCol (Fr) Chris Hoffman, Chief of Staff Maj Curt Voelbel, Membership Chair Maj Curt Voelbel, Scholarship Chair LTC Laura Wickett, Legislative Chair LTC Mike Galaty, Surviving Spouse Liaison Mrs. Lisa Hightower, Newsletter Editor COL Jack Burtnett, Webmaster MAJ Raul Gonzalez, Personal Affairs LtCol Twila Davis, Community Relations CW4 Tom Jackson,

(Continued on page 4)

Last Meeting - continued from page 3

Photos were taken and MAJ Holland passed the gavel to President Gonzalez.

MAJ Gonzalez asked if there were any corrections to the 1 March 2023 Meeting Minutes as posted in the Volusia Officer's Call (VOC). Motion was made to accept the minutes as published by Maj Cotten and seconded by LTC Tauber. Motion carried.

MAJ Gonzalez asked if there were any corrections to the 5 April 2023 Meeting Minutes as posted in the Volusia Officer's Call (VOC). Motion was made to accept the minutes as published by COL Burtnett and seconded by LTC Galaty. Motion carried.

MAJ Gonzalez called for reports:

Secretary's Report: LtCol Twila Davis-excused

Treasurer's Report: Maj Pete Durnell reported a balance as of 30 April 2023 of \$5,476.82. Treasurer's report is given for informational purposes and is subject to audit.

Directors and Committee Reports:
LTC Laura Wickett -1st VP – excused,

2nd VP- CAPT Bonner - "Operation Camaraderie" Picnic on 27 April 2023 at Gemini Springs Park had 39 attendees. It was a beautiful setting and camaraderie was achieved.

Maj Mick Cotten -Director- nothing to report.

Col Jim Winter -Director - U.S. Congressman Cory Mills from Florida's 7th District will be our September speaker. State Senator Tom Wright, District 8, will be our October speaker.

MAJ Shirley Burtnett -Director – nothing to report.

LTC Laura Wickett- Scholarship Chair was ex-

cused. MAJ Gonzalez announced we had three applicants for the scholarships. One applicant did not meet the qualification criteria. The two \$1000 scholarships award recipients are Cadet Anaeli Infante from University HS and Cadet Joshua Moore from Pine Ridge HS.

LTC Mike Galaty -Legislative Chair – Mike just became a Lifetime MOAA member. Thanks to Pat Green for discussing all the legislative issues. All members are encouraged to go on MOAA's very easy website and contact Congress. Numbers count. In addition, the latest MOAA magazine has postcards for all of us to mail in support of keeping Arlington Cemetery open for burials of currently authorized veterans.

Maj Curt Voelbel –Chief of Staff and Membership Chair– we have 55 current members including our newest member, BG William Feyk who joined today. Our goal is 58. Flyers with applications are on each table. Use them to "Go Hunting" for new members over the summer. CW4 Thomas Jackson- Community Relations- Presented our check to the Marching Bulldogs of DeLand HS who will be representing Florida at the Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC. Past President- 1LT Ray Parker- excused. CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann- Chaplain- CH Hoffmann stated that it's good to share our problems and issues with others. We may find Wounded Healers who have gone through the very same thing and can help us through. Don't be afraid to ask for help. COL Jack Burtnett – Editor – the next issue of the Volusia Officers Call will be sent out in late August along with a new Member Directory. Please send your photos and your spouse's photos for inclusion in the new directory. Ms. Lisa Hightower – Surviving Spouse Liaison- it's good to get involved with Chapter activities. Do more than just attend the luncheon, you will feel the reward of friendship. Go Hunting for new members.

(Continued on page 5)

*Last Meeting - continued from page 4***ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

MAJ Gonzalez announced the FCoC 2023 Convention will be held at the Renaissance Hotel World Golf Village, St, Augustine, FL May 19-21, 2023. Registration closed April 27, 2023. Attendees will be: Maj Durnell, LTC Wickett, MAJ & Mrs. Gonzalez, COL & MAJ Burtnett. We hope to get information to help our planning for 2024.

During the summer, committee chairs will be planning for our chapter hosting the FCoC 2024 Convention at The Shores Resort and Spa, Daytona Beach, FL May 12 -15, 2024. In September, we will be asking for all hands-on deck to assist with the hosting requirement. Be ready to get involved.

Deltona Memorial Gardens will be hosting a Memorial Day Commemoration on 29 May 2023 at 1030 hours. MAJ Gonzalez, LTC Wickett, and Maj Cotten plan to attend. ALL are welcome.

Executive Board Meeting will be held on 10 May 2023, 1000 hours at the Debary Country Club. Members are welcome to attend. Our next luncheon meeting will be 6 SEP 2023. Location may change. Maj Voelbel asked for a show of hands for people who wanted to stay at the Country Club and those who wanted to move. When asked if anyone would not come if we keep our location, no one raised a hand. It was 50/50 so the board will discuss options and decide. All details and guest speaker information will be in the September VOC. MAJ Gonzalez wants to institute a saying and response like he used in the military. Say "Camaraderie", response is "With A Purpose".

MAJ Gonzalez stated that his father grew up in Puerto Rico during the Depression. His father said Puerto Rico never gave him anything; America gave it all. All members rose to sing God Bless America.

Meeting adjourned at 1317 hours.

Notes/minutes taken by MAJ Shirley Burtnett

Edited and distributed by LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, (Ret) Secretary

Membership -

Have you invited anyone to the first luncheon of our new year on Sep 6th? We hope to see them there! Our motto is Never Stop Serving and I would add, Never Stop Recruiting. Much like all successful actions, it takes being consistently intentional but also interesting and passionate about why you are a member of National MOAA and our local West Volusia Chapter. Having effective phrases in your hip pocket can make a difference in your efforts. Try these: "We not only advocate for military benefits but have been successful in mitigating the erosion of benefits that were promised and deserved/earned", "We enjoy camaraderie with a purpose", "We help our local Homeless Vets", and "We provide JROTC scholarships to our local High Schools", "You have the opportunity to apply your career skills and expertise as a working Board member", and finally, "You and your spouse can make new friends". Help us reach our goal of having 58 members of which we are currently 3 short. We have accomplished this in prior years, let's make it happen again. Happy hunting!

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.

*Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET
Membership*

NEVER STOP SERVING®

Legislative—continued from page 2

Try it 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 the screen. Tap the link to open the Legislative Action Center site. You will see a form to fill out. Then tap "submit".



Do your part - TAKE ACTION - BE AN ADVOCATE

Prepared by LTC Michael Galaty Jr
USA, (Retired), Legislative

**Coming soon—**

LtCol Twila Davis has created an opportunity for us to purchase WVMC embroidered apparel. She will have more information at the 6 September meeting.

Pictured here is LtCol Davis wearing a shirt with the WVMC logo.



NEVER STOP SERVING®

Promotion -

One of our newer members has recently been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the USAF. Picture is LtCol Kathleen Voelbel with her proud parents Aurora and Curt Voelbel. Kathleen is currently stationed at Wright Patterson AFB, OH.



FCoC Annual Convention 2024 -

Coming in May, the West Volusia MOAA Chapter will host the 2024 Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) annual convention. The convention will be from 12 May to 15 May and be at the Shores Resort & Spa located in Daytona Beach (www.shoresresort.com). Planning began shortly after FCoC's January Leadership Conference when our chapter was offered and accepted the opportunity to organize and host this significant event in FCoC's annual calendar. A five-member planning team got together with the President of the FCoC to lay out the requirements for this event and later to locate and inspect potential hotel venues. The Shores Resort & Spa was chosen as best suited to our needs.

In the months leading up to the May event, our chapter will be busy preparing for our hosting duties. They include identifying and, when necessary, booking various activities for attendees to do while at the conference or following it as that is an option; organizing the registration "team" and the hospitality suite "team"; and doing all the preparations that will need doing up to and including during the convention.

Needless to say, the Planning Team will need help. Starting in September look for requests to help with various aspects of this project. From September to December much of the preliminary planning will have to be completed as the FCoC web site will begin offering opportunities to sign up for attendance at the convention in January. As we get closer to the convention, we will certainly be looking for volunteers to "man" various position notably in registration and hospitality but for other tasks as well.

So.....mark your calendar and "save the dates" of 12 to 15 May, 2024. As either a volunteer helper or an attendee, we, as a chapter, will be front and center before the gathering of all Florida MOAA chapters. More information will be provided at the September chapter meeting.

Maj Pete Durnell, USAF RET
Committee Chairperson

Board of Directors Dinner. On 13 July, The Board of Directors had an informal meeting at the Top Of Daytona restaurant which is next door to the Shores Resort & Spa. After dinner they attended Todd Bogue's Ridiculous Comedy Magic Show which will be an attraction at our 2024 FCoC Convention.



The show was hilarious and several members got to participate. It is always fun to laugh at others. A good meal and great time was had by all.

Maj Pete Durnell assists Todd Bogue during his performance.



Photos by Curt Voelbel, Maj, USAF, (Ret)

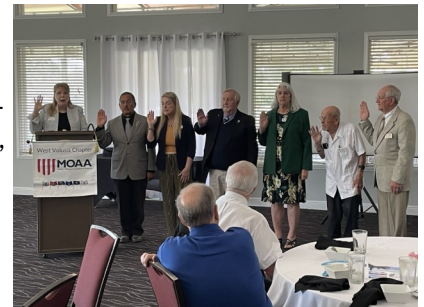
There will be a donations's bucket for Wreaths Across America at the luncheon's door. Please donate to this worthy cause.

May Meeting—

President Raul Gonzalez Passes out Mothers Day flowers to the ladies.

MAJ Lorraine Holland USA (Ret), FCoC Area VP, swears in the new elected WVMC leadership.

From left to right: Maj Holland, Pres. Gonzalez, 2ndVP Bonner, Treasurer Durnell, Director Burtnett, Director Cotten, and Director Winter.



Pat Green tells the members about her late April participation in MOAA's Advocacy in Action in Washington, DC, making personal calls to legislator offices.

photos by Ernie Tauber
LTC USANG (Ret)



The May meeting concluded with the singing of God Bless America.

**Florida Chapter of Councils Convention—
18–21 May 2023**

MOAA President LtGen Kelly, USAF, RET and FCoC President CDR Kleuver, USN, RET present the Communications Award to WVMC President MAJ Raul Gonzalez, FLARNG, RET at the President's Reception on 19 May.



2023 conference attendees about the plans for the 2024 FCoC Convention in Daytona Beach.

A Memorial Service was held on 20 May for the members who passed away during the past year.

MAJ Lorraine Holland, USA, RET, FCoC Area VP, reads the name of WMVC's deceased members: Darwin Tennant, MAJ, USA, RET and Bob Wiltuck, Col, USAF, RET.



Pete Durnell and Frances Gonzalez pose with costumed participants at the President's Reception on 19 May.



Photos by various people

The Chaplain's Corner -



Walking in Someone Else's Shoes

If you are like me, you can make a quick judgment about people who do things that annoy. Someone who cuts their grass first thing in the morning, a barking dog that doesn't seem to get quiet, or people who are very slow at the supermarket. You probably have other things that bother you. While it may be true that others may be selfish, perhaps if we knew their story, we might discover something else.

The person who is a slow shopper may be still recovering from surgery and that is as fast as they can go safely. That dog might be a rescue animal that is still nervous around people. Those who cut their grass early in the morning might do so to avoid getting a heart attack, or they have to attend to a spouse later in the day.

When I first did prison ministry, I was quite nervous. I had made a judgment that these people must be very different from me. I found just the opposite. One man I got to know had been abusing alcohol and ended up getting into an accident where someone died. He deeply regretted what he had done and made it his goal to make amends to the family that lost their loved one. He is now out of prison and trains animals to be support for those who have had a trauma.

A number of our parishioners decided they wanted to help the homeless. Some of them first thought the homeless must be lazy and selfish to have gotten into that situation. What they discovered is that some of the homeless were very industrious but battled addiction or mental health problems. They often look out for each other and help those who are struggling to

find food. Some will even give up food they have been given at a shelter so that another person may not go hungry.

It is hard to walk in the shoes of another, but when we do so we become better people. It is easier to give people the benefit of the doubt and look to help rather than be critical.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET
Chaplain*

The next meeting, 6 Sep, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be grilled chicken breast over a bed of linguine with pesto and served with chef's choice of 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 Florida state senator Tom Wright. Our guest speaker in October will be Brig Gen Coffey, Assistant Adjutant General of the Florida Air National Guard.

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



Upcoming Meeting: 6 SEP 2023
Following Meeting: 4 OCT 2023
Upcoming Board Meeting: 13 SEP 2023

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.

From the Chief of Staff -

As you are aware, we are hosting the Florida Council of Chapters meeting in Daytona Beach Shores, May 12-15, 2024. All Florida Chapters, represented by approximately 200 members will attend. As such, we will need volunteers to help make this a memorable event that will recognize our chapter and our community outreach. You will have the opportunity to sign up to help and/or attend at our Sep 6 luncheon.

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

NEW: Sample Tee Shirts and Hat with our local chapter Logo will be on display for you to purchase or order. Pricing TBD.

Veterans Causes

Your Board has decided to support Barracks of Hope in Daytona. They provide 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. In 2019, Barracks of Hope served 52 veterans and helped move 28 into permanent housing. Please bring to each luncheon "Hygiene Bags" filled with Toothpaste, Brush, Shampoo, Soap, Deodorant, etc. in a plastic Zip bag.

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 Junior ROTC Scholarships.

Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET
Chief of Staff

Guest Speaker Bio -

State Senator Tom A. Wright

Senator Wright was initially elected to the Florida Senate in 2016 and successfully reelected in 2022 to represent Senate District 08, which consists of parts of Brevard and Volusia Counties. He currently serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism, and serves as a member on six other Senate Committees. He is also proud to serve as Chair of the Florida Space Caucus, Chair of the Florida Manufacturing Caucus and a member of the Florida Defense Support Task Force.

Some of Senator Wright's main legislative priorities have been supporting military and veteran families, addressing the needs of law enforcement and other first responders, ensuring Florida stays the Space Capital of the world, and striving to protect Floridians through consumer protection and prescription drug transparency initiatives.

Throughout his personal life, Senator Wright has dedicated his time and effort to assist with affordable housing for the homeless, and to eliminate the domestic abuse of women, children and animals. He also owns companies in Minnesota that manufacture and distribute air-supplied respiratory protection equipment. As a state senator, he strives to make a positive difference in our great state of Florida.

JROTC Leadership Award—

On 18 May, WVMC President Raul Gonzalez presented the Leadership Award to Deltona High School Cadet SGM Amber East. She is flanked by her Senior Military Instructors.



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

First Dues Notice - -

Members are reminded that dues are now due for the year 2023-24. The dues are **\$35**. Please get a check or MO to Treasurer Pete Durnell as soon as practicable. Pete's address is Peter Durnell, 319 E Victoria Trails Blvd, DeLand, FL 32724.

Check out **OUR** website at 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.

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



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