



# The Volusia Officers Call

## West Volusia MOAA Chapter, INC. (WVMC)

An Affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America



**Vol 32, No 6, FEB 2024**

*Inside this Issue:*

**President's Perspective**  
Page 1

**Club Leadership**  
Page 2

**MOAA Take Action**  
Page 2

**Legislative**  
Page 2

**Last Meeting Minutes**  
Page 3

**Newest Member**  
Page 5

**Membership**  
Page 5

**Guest Speaker Bio**  
Page 6

**Chief of Staff**  
Page 7

**Chaplain's Corner**  
Page 8

**Upcoming Meetings**  
Page 8

**FCoC Convention Flyer**  
Page 9

**Items to Note**  
Page 10

### **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—**

Change is inevitable. As much as I'd like to keep things the way I'd prefer them to be, I realize that many things are out of my control. So, I plan, organize, and attempt to inspire, and motivate others by sharing my vision. In the end, I realize that I must take risks to deal with things that I can't control. And things often happen unexpectedly just when everything is going smoothly. Yes...change can be challenging to manage. However, accepting change with a positive attitude helps me to adapt to my circumstances with less stress and to help others as they meet changes of their own. All I know is that we are all affected by the unexpected. In December we reported our gains and losses to MOAA National. We lost some members...*Change*. But we also gained new members...*Change*. Our biggest challenge is staying motivated and focused. Why, you ask? Because MOAA has a purpose. We are a part of the Team, and teamwork gets the job done! I have a job to do, but I'm not alone. I'm surrounded by people that inspire me to be better. and I thank God that we can work together to carry out common goals. So, as you read this article, I ask you to consider what you can do to make our chapter better. Attend the membership meetings. Join the Board. Participate in chapter activities. Invite a prospective member. Change can bring Opportunity.

(Continued on page 5)

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**MOAA Take Action Center -**<http://takeaction.moaa.org>**Legislative -****MOAA on TOP 2023 Lobbyist list for 17<sup>th</sup> Year**

The Hill, one of the Nation's top Beltway-focused news outlets, has again placed MOAA on the TOP Lobbyist list for the 17th year in a row. Lt Gen Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), stated "The grassroots support of our councils and chapters has been the backbone of our advocacy mission along with the tens of thousands of MOAA members who bring our agenda items to their lawmakers via our Legislative Action Center."

**Several of MOAA's advocacy efforts in 2023 included:**

Bringing several key Legislative proposals into the final FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act negotiations, which included:

An increase in the Basic Allowance for Housing and a requirement for a detailed report on beneficiary access to the TRI-CARE pharmacy network.

Defending service-earned burial benefits by supporting H.R.1413, the expanding America's National Cemetery Act.

Leading the ongoing push for passage of the Major Richard Star Act, which now has the support of more than two-thirds of lawmakers.

February is a key time to contact your elected officials, February is when congressional offices are submitting their request for the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NOAA).

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344), which would authorize combat-injured veterans to receive their full DoD retirement pay earned for years of service and their full VA disability compensation for lifelong injury.

(Continued on page 5)

***Last Meeting (3 JAN 2024) -***

President MAJ Raul Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 1142 hours.

Attendance: 33

CH LTC Chris Hoffmann gave the invocation followed by The Pledge of Allegiance.

MAJ Gonzalez welcomed our members and guests: New Member: LTC Barry Haupt, Guests: MAJ Lorraine Holland FCoC Area VP, Ms. Pat Green MOAA National Surviving Spouse Liaison and COL Steve Bond FCoC 1stVP and speaker for today.

Lunch was served: Chicken Quesadilla, Asparagus, and Chocolate Chip cookies

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

CW4 Thomas Jackson won the free lunch for the 7 FEB 2024 meeting/luncheon.

MAJ Gonzalez introduced: COL Steve Bond FCoC 1stVP

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.

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.

COL Bond explained the mission of the FCoC: Intermediate between the chapters and MOAA, Community Service, Legislative: lead and coordinate state legislative matters.

Florida has approximately 38,000 + MOAA members; only about 4,000 belong to a Florida chapter. The largest FL chapter is Cape Canaveral with 1,091 members; the smallest chapter Bay County has 3 members.

COL Bond stated the annual convention is held to encourage camaraderie. He stated since COVID participation has decreased. He is hoping more members will participate in the MAY 2024 convention. He thanked WVMC for hosting the convention.

COL Bond also stated the FCoC Leadership Conference will be held 25-28 JAN 2024 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando.

COL Bond stated one of our most important goals is to encourage members to contact their Congressmen on supporting MOAA legislative initiatives'.

MAJ Gonzalez thanked COL Bond for speaking to the WVMC today.

(Continued on page 4)

**Last Meeting - continued from page 3**

MAJ Gonzalez asked if there were any corrections to the 6 December 2023 Luncheon Meeting Minutes as posted in the VOC. Action deferred to next meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

MAJ Gonzalez stated he was unable to connect with the Nation Guard unit to identify a family in need. MAJ Gonzalez stated he will go to the unit in person to get the name of a family in need and follow through with the donation.

MAJ Gonzalez stated that several of the WVMC Board members will be attending the FCoC Leadership Conference 25-28 JAN 2024 at the Rosen Centre Hotel, 9840 International Drive, Orlando.

MAJ Gonzalez stated our Chapter is hosting the FCoC Conference 12-15 May 2024 at the Shores Resort and Spa 2637 S. Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach, FL. We need volunteers to help with this event. The planning is done. Currently working on soliciting ads for the convention magazine.

MAJ Gonzalez stated we will be applying for the MOAA Level of Excellence Award. Please submit information of community service to LtCol Twila Davis NLT 20 Jan 2024.

**NEW BUSINESS:** none

MAJ Gonzalez called for reports:

Secretary's Report: LtCol Twila Davis- nothing to report

Treasurer's Report: Maj Pete Durnell excused.

Directors and Committee Reports:

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

2nd VP- CAPT Bonner – nothing to report

Maj Mick Cotten -Director- excused

Col Jim Winter -Director –nothing to report

MAJ Shirley Burtnett -Director – nothing to report

LTC Laura Wickett- Scholarship Chair –stated she will be delivering the Scholarship applications and letter to the schools in the next few weeks.

LTC Mike Galaty -Legislative Chair –encouraged all members to take action on the MOAA legislative platforms. He stated it is very easy and he included the QR Code in the VOC.

Maj Curt Voelbel –Chief of Staff and Membership Chair– reported we have 50+ current members. Our goal is 58. The exact number will be reported after the final tally is completed of those members renewing their membership. Keep recruiting.

CW4 Thomas Jackson- Community Relations mentioned the cruise he was on recently was wonderful and highly recommended it.

Past President- 1LT Ray Parker-excused.

CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann- Chaplain-reviewed the story of St. Sebastian- Feastday January 20. St. Sebastian, who was a Christian, became a Roman Soldier to be of service to other Christians who were being persecuted by the Romans. While trying to protect other Christians, he was reported as a Christian to Emperor Diocletian. The Emperor, who was known for ordering the deaths of Christians, scolded Sebastian and ordered him to be killed by having him tied to a stake on a training field and used for target practice. His body was full of arrows and the archers left his body for retrieval and burial. He was recovered by Irene of Rome when she discovered he was still alive. She hid him and nursed him back to health. Once well, Sebastian went to the Emperor and criticized him for his persecution of the Christians. The Emperor was surprised that Sebastian was alive. This time the Emperor ordered Sebastian to be beaten to death with clubs then his body thrown in the sewers. His body was recovered by a Christian woman and she secretly buried him in the catacombs beneath Rome. St Sebastian is the patron

(Continued on page 7)



**Legislative—continued from page 2**

Use your smart phone and the QR code below to send your elected officials a message. 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. Select one or more recipient letters. Select and then tap "submit".

SCAN HERE:



Do your part-TAKE ACTION - BE AN ADVOCATE.

LTC Michael Galaty Jr, USA, RET  
Legislative

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**President's Perspective—continued from page 1**

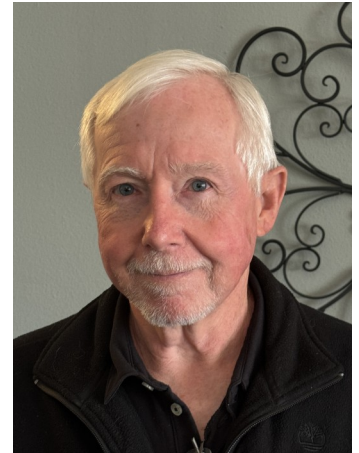
*"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." James Baldwin*



MAJ Raul Gonzalez, FLARNG, RET  
President

**New Member—**

LTC Barry Haupt, USA, RET is our newest member, and he lives in DeLand. Please take the time to welcome Barry at our February meeting.

**Membership -**

Beginning CY 2023 member strength was 50 and at year end we had 54. We lost 3 members and recruited 7 new members, a net gain of 4. These numbers represent very impressive recruiting efforts thanks to all those who look at recruiting as not only important to our Chapter's health but who are also very intentional and successful in asking potential eligible members to join us. Let's set a CY 2024 goal of 60.

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 -

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Jeff Brower  
County Chair

✉ jrbrower@volusia.org

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📠 386-822-5707

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The Volusia County Chair serves as the official and ceremonial representative of the government; issues proclamations on behalf of the government; presides as chair in County Council meetings and has an equal vote on all questions coming before it; and executes ordinances, resolutions and other authorized documents of the government. Jeff Brower began a four-year term in January 2021.

**Government experience**

Associate Supervisor for the Volusia Soil & Water Conservation District

**Community service**

Board Member, Sons of the Beach

Father, business owner providing community service and volunteering as a family

**Education**

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science, University of Florida

**Employment**

Volusia County lifeguard (1970-79)

Nursery manager

Sales and marketing manager

Executive recruiter

Owner/operator of a landscape-design-build company

Family-owned and operated organic farm

**Personal**

Jeff Brower is a lifelong resident of Volusia County. He was born in Pennsylvania, but his family moved to Daytona Beach when Mr. Brower was 3-years-old. One of his first jobs was as a Volusia County lifeguard beginning in 1970, where he went on to become the first of two lifeguards to earn their EMT certification. Mr. Brower moved to DeLeon Springs in 1980 and married his wife, Terri, in 1985. They are the parents of nine children – four boys and five girls, including two active-duty military. He and his family have operated a direct-to-consumer farm since 2000 and a landscape construction company since 2004.

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

saint of soldiers, athletes and those who desire a saintly death.

COL Jack Burtnett – Editor – nothing to report

Ms. Lisa Hightower – Surviving Spouse Liaison- nothing to report

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Executive Board Meeting will be held on 10 January 2024, 1000 hours at the Debary Country Club. Members are welcome to attend.

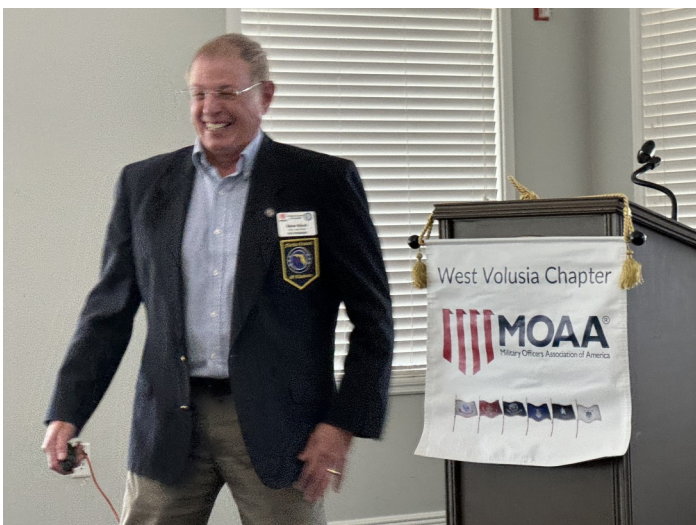
Our next luncheon meeting will be 7 FEB 2024. Meeting adjourned at 1315 hours.

LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET  
Secretary

***January Guest Speaker—***

COL Steve Bond, USA, RET, is currently the Senior Vice President of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Florida Council (FCoC) and a Past President of the MOAA Cape Canaveral Chapter. Steve will be installed later this year as President of the FCoC.

Steve shares a lighter moment at the 3 January luncheon.

***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. Because this is the first time we have hosted and it is right in our backyard, we encourage you to attend. You can commute daily or make it a short vacation on the beach for anywhere from 1-5 nights of fun! See Curt Voelbel, Pete Durnell or Raul Gonzalez to volunteer or for more information about registering.

***If you are willing to secure ads in the magazine for this event, it will help our chapter in a BIG way financially and potentially garner business for those who purchase an AD. Again, 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 printed 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 and 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 -



### The Four Chaplains Remembered

On Feb. 3, 1943 the SS Dorchester was sailing for Europe with 900 American soldiers aboard. The ship was about 100 miles off the coast of Greenland when a German submarine launched a torpedo that hit the center of Dorchester. It immediately began to sink. Men were scrambling searching for life jackets. Many were young men who had never ventured very far from the place where they born. Naturally many were panicking.

Aboard that ship were four chaplains. Fr. John Washington, a Catholic priest, Rev. Clark Poling, a minister in the Reformed Church in America, Rabbi Alexander Goode, a Jew, and Rev. George Fox, a Methodist minister. Each of these chaplains did what chaplains do in the face of danger. They were a calming influence helping men find life jackets and getting off the sinking ship. They preached courage and offered words of hope.

When all the life jackets were gone the four chaplains gave away the ones they were wearing so others could live. Of the 900 men aboard that ship 230 were saved. The survivors noted the four chaplains were joined arm and arm praying and singing as the Dorchester sank in the icy cold Atlantic.

What joined them in life was the desire to serve God and take care of people. What united them in death was their sacrifice that went beyond the boundaries of denomination. They were men who trusted that God was with them.

Most of us know something about those four brave chaplains who gave their lives so others might live. But they are a reminder to each of us who have served that we all signed up for

the same. Military members always know that it is service before self. But you could say that this goes back even further than when we joined the military.

We know that as human beings and as Americans we stand together, especially in times of tragedy. We hold out a hand to someone without asking them their religion. We give food and blankets to the homeless regardless of why they are in that situation. We take care of the vulnerable. I pray that the example of the four chaplains remind us who we are and what we aspire to be each and every day.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET  
Chaplain*



The next meeting, 7 Feb, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be salmon filet glazed in a sweet Thai chili sauce served with Chef's 2 sides. 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 Volusia County Council Chair Jeff Brower.

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

**Upcoming Meeting: 7 FEB 2024**

**Following Meeting: 6 MAR 2024**

**Upcoming Board Meeting: 14 FEB 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.moaafll.org/Chapters/VolusiaMOAA](http://www.moaafll.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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**DeBary Country Club**

The Perfect Venue For Special Occasions.  
 Partnering with West Volusia MOAA.  
 Committed to our members and veterans.

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