



The Volusia Officers Call

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



Vol 32, No 8, APR 2024

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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—

In the summer of 2023, our Chapter Board decided to host this year's Convention. After many months of planning, and with the collaboration of the Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC), the planning committee has put together a promising event. We are delighted to extend a warm invitation to you for the Annual Convention taking place from 12 to 15 May at the exquisite Shores Resort and Spa in beautiful Daytona Beach. I encourage you to attend and help make this convention a success. Register online at the FCoC website, www.flmoaa.org, sooner rather than later. I am looking forward to your participation. And, do not forget the "Brick" Ads in the Convention magazine.

At the April meeting we will be voting on the Slate of Officers for 2024. They will be sworn in at the May meeting. Thank these members for their commitment to your Chapter. We also need several volunteers to attend and present the MOAA Leadership awards at our four area high schools during April and May. Also on April 25, 2024, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm there will be an open house event for the new Daytona Beach VA Clinic. The event is onsite at 1776 N Williamson Blvd. Take this opportunity to meet the staff, learn about this new facility, and the care and resources that will be offered.

Finally, we wish to express our deepest sympathy to LTC Milt Corley and his family on the passing of his wife, Rutha. We share in their sorrow with love and friendship.

MAJ Raul Gonzalez, FLARNG, RET
President

**WEST VOLUSIA MOAA CHAPTER
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MOAA Take Action Center -<http://takeaction.moaa.org>***Legislative -****Highlights of some of MOAA's Major Accomplishments Specific to Military Retirees***Increasing SGLI and VGLI Coverage**

The maximum Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage moved from \$400,000 to \$500,000 as of March 1, 2023, and all eligible servicemembers will be enrolled to receive that new maximum, even if they've previously declined coverage. The long-overdue increase became law as part of the MOAA and TMC backed Supporting Families of the Fallen Act, which also increased Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) coverage by the same amount.

Protecting TRICARE For Life

Since the TRICARE For Life (TFL) program launched in 2001, it has come under budgetary attack in multiple legislative cycles, with MOAA and other advocacy groups working to preserve the benefit for Medicare-eligible uniformed services retirees and their families. MOAA's advocacy efforts, including congressional testimony, statements for the record, and engagement with Armed Services Committee staff and member offices on Capitol Hill, successfully blocked five consecutive administration budget request proposals.

Lessening the Impact of TRICARE Fee Hikes

MOAA has long fought legislation that would burden TRICARE beneficiaries with additional costs as a way to address budget shortfalls in other areas. As Congress considered potential military health system reforms, MOAA was instrumental in Blocking the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission health care proposal to eliminate TRICARE and replace it with a

(Continued on page 6)

Last Meeting (6 MAR 2024) -

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

Attendance: 31

Maj Lewis Long gave the invocation followed by The Pledge of Allegiance.

MAJ Gonzalez welcomed our members and guests: Al Everson, Reporter for The West Volusia Beacon Newspaper, MAJ Lorraine Holland, FCoC Area VP, and welcome back to members Maj Lewis Long and Capt Marshal Vance.

Lunch was served: Chicken Francese with Lemon Cream Sauce, Mashed Potatoes, Broccoli, and Brownie with Ice Cream for dessert.

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

MAJ Raul Gonzalez won the free lunch for the 3 April 2024 meeting/luncheon.

MAJ Gonzalez introduced: Al Everson, Reporter for The West Volusia Beacon Newspaper. Mr. Everson was born in Bristol, Virginia. He was the only child of parents who came of age during the Great Depression and took part in World War II. His father was a career soldier, a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, and the Cold War. His dad retired in 1965 with the rank of master sergeant and 22 1/2 years of active duty. His father also served in the Tennessee National Guard. During WW2, he was assigned to General George S. Patton's Third Army for the invasion of Germany.

Al's career goal was to become a medical doctor. He attended King College in Bristol then transferred to Stetson University in 1969 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1971. Though trained as a teacher, he went to work in radio, which he loved. In 1999 the station he worked at was sold, so he moved to Deland and has been employed by the Beacon Newspaper since January 2000.

He has done extensive research into the prisoner-of-war/missing-in-action issue, has written several articles on the subject, and hopes

to complete a definitive book on the subject.

Mr. Everson discussed the sad situation of the number of missing Prisoners of War (POWs) and Missing in Action (MIAs) from all previous wars the United States was involved in. Mr. Everson has done extensive research on this issue and claims many Americans captured during these wars were left behind in the hands of their enemies. He stated he has interviewed many prior military members, family members and government officials about the issue of remaining POWs/MIAs. He stated that LTC Philip Corso, who worked for General MacArthur during the Korean War as Officer in Charge of keeping track of enemy POW camps in North Korea, testified in 1992 at Senate hearings that he believed hundreds of American POWs were abandoned at these camps. Mr. Everson stated that none of the U.S. Presidents during these wars or since have addressed or acknowledged the issue.

Mr. Everson shared with the members, a booklet he wrote "To Proclaim Liberty to the Captives". This booklet highlights supporting information on the claim that there are still POWs in enemy hands. Mr. Everson is also writing a book about the subject which he hopes to have completed in the near future.

MAJ Gonzalez thanked Al Everson for speaking to the WVMC today and will be presenting him with a FCoC coin in the near future.

MAJ Gonzalez asked if there were any corrections to the 7 February 2024 Luncheon Meeting Minutes as posted in the VOC. Motion to approve the minutes as posted in the VOC was made by LTC Laura Wickett and seconded by CW04 Ted Seaman Sr. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. MAJ Gonzalez read the report from the nominating committee of the slate of nominations for the elected and appointed officers for the 2024-2025 year. He stated the nominations will be voted on at the April 2024 meeting. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the April meeting.
 2. 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
- (Continued on page 4)

Last Meeting - continued from page 3

Beach, FL. And asked Maj Pete Durnell for an update. Maj Durnell stated the planning for the conference is complete. They are in the process of fine tuning some details. We need volunteers to help with this event. Currently working on soliciting ads for the convention magazine. One way to support the conference is to submit a "Brick" in memory of a loved one. The cost is \$15.00. Registration is open on line at FLMOAA.org. MAJ Gonzalez showed the members the cover for the program book and our chapter's full-page ad for the book. Maj Curt Voelbel stated there will be a silent auction at the conference. He stated anyone can donate auction items. He also showed an example of a display for auctioning an item that is not a physical item.... Like a one week stay at an Air BnB or discount points for a cruise.

3. MAJ Gonzalez stated that our chapter will not be submitting an application for a MOAA grant this year. He plans to attend a zoom meeting on this subject and will plan to submit a grant application next year.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. MAJ Gonzalez stated he will follow up with the Volusia County Veterans Council on Memorial Day services.

2. MAJ Gonzalez stated he will be asking for volunteers to assist/attend the area High Schools JROTC Award Ceremonies. Dates and times will be shared as we receive the information.

3. MAJ Lorraine Holland announced there will be a Retiree Appreciation Day at UCF on 18 May 2024.

MAJ Gonzalez called for reports:

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

Treasurer's Report: Maj Pete Durnell reported the checking account balance as of 6 MAR 2024 is \$ 51664.89 and \$2700.51 in savings. The total earmarked for the ROTC Scholarships is \$2756.00 and \$500.00 for VET Causes. Treasurers report is given for informational purpose and is subject to audit.

Directors and Committee Reports:

LTC Laura Wickett -1st VP – stated name tags are available to purchase, if interested please see her after the meeting.

2nd VP- CAPT Bonner – excused

Vacant -Director-

Col Jim Winter -Director –nothing to report.

MAJ Shirley Burtnett -Director – nothing to report.

LTC Laura Wickett- Scholarship Chair –. Stated she sent letters to the Senior Military Instructors and school counselors with information about our scholarship program but has not received any responses. She will follow up.

LTC Mike Galaty -Legislative Chair –encouraged all members to take action on the MOAA legislative platforms.

Maj Curt Voelbel –Chief of Staff and Membership Chair– reported we have 54 current members. Our goal is 60. Keep recruiting.

CW4 Thomas Jackson- shared the information and flyer about the Parachutes for Patriots event 22-23 March 2024 Skydive Deland, 1600 Flight Line Blvd; Saturday 23 March 24-Tandems for Veterans 0800-1200; Block Party 1800-2100-behind the Elusive Grape, 129 N. Woodland Blvd. CW4 Ted Seaman stated they need help marketing the event and in coordinating a color guard. CW4 Tom Jackson stated that our chapter's charity is Barracks of Hope.

CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann- Chaplain-excused. LTC Michael Magee-Speaker Coordinator- announced the speaker for the April 2024 meeting will be a representative from the FL Department of Transportation. He also asked if anyone had suggestions for speakers to please contact him.

COL Jack Burtnett – Editor – nothing to report.

Ms. Lisa Hightower – Surviving Spouse Liaison-shared that she was able to visit with Capt Doug Speight before his passing and is assisting Ruthie (Continued on page 6)

Membership -

As mentioned at our March luncheon, we currently have 54 members. Our CY 2024 goal is 60. Also at our last luncheon, I handed out "recruiting" business cards to everyone. Be sure to keep a few in your wallet or purse and share them with potential members. Tell them who we are, what we do and the benefits of membership. Simply share why you enjoy being a member and why they should come on board as well! Just point them to me and I will take from there.

When you do get to speak to a potential eligible member, remember to let them know that Legislative Advocacy is our primary mission. The chapter provides grassroots support for MOAA National's legislative agenda. We also work in concert with the Florida Council of Chapters for State legislation affecting veterans to let our elected representatives know what is important to us. By working together, we make our voices heard — LOUDLY! The larger our numbers, the greater our impact!

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. Be aware that there are distinct advantages for surviving spouses of Life members. 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*

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. You may also place a business card size ad in the magazine honoring a family member or a friend for only \$15 each.

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.

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*

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Last Meeting - continued from page 4

Speight. She stated she and MAJ Gonzalez visited the Riviera Senior Living Retirement Community in Holly Hill. She said this facility was very nice and it is for independent living and assisted living arrangements. Ms. Hightower emphasized that members need to prepare for their passing by gathering crucial information and documents to help their family members when the time comes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Reminder Daylight Savings time change is this Sunday.

CW4 Tom Jackson state 4-5 May 2024 is Volusia Valor Day, Honoring Heroes Volusia County Fairgrounds, DeLand. More information at www.ww2armor.org

Maj Lewis Long suggested the CEO of Surety Bank, Deland would be a good speaker to discuss the concerns about banks closing.

Executive Board Meeting will be held on 13 March 2024, 1000 hours at the DeBary Country Club. Members are welcome to attend.

Our next luncheon meeting will be 3 April 2024 1100 hours at the DeBary Country Club.

The members closed the meeting by singing "God Bless America".

Meeting adjourned at 1328 hours.

LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET
Secretary

Silent Auction—

We need items for the silent auction at the FCoC Convention which we are hosting in May. Lisa Hightower and Karen Clay are in charge of this effort so please let them know if you have something, or know of someone who has something, that would be suitable as a silent auction item. Convention which we are hosting. Contact Lisa at lisamh4550@yahoo.com

Legislative—continued from page 2

selection of commercial health plans including monthly premiums and significantly higher out-of-pocket costs for working-age retirees.

Defeating 'COLA Minus 1 Percent

Language passed in late-2013 continuing resolution would have cut any cost-of-living (COLA) adjustment for military retirees by 1 percent. Any increase of less than a percent would mean no raise for these retirees, though the law prohibited any negative adjustment. Despite opposition of the proposal by many lawmakers, the provision became law the day after Christmas. MOAA and some other members of The Military Coalition – a coalition of dozens of groups representing millions of servicemembers, retirees, their families, and survivors – testified to Congress on the harm this measure would do to military retirees.

Boosting Compensation Significantly for Retirees With 50% VA Disability

MOAA has been fighting for concurrent receipt, the ability to receive both retired pay and VA compensation in full each month, since the early 2000s. While that fight continues, a key milestone came with the passage of the FY 2004 NDAA in 2003, which authorized a 10-year phase-in of concurrent receipt for all retirees with a 50% or greater VA disability rating.

For more detailed information regarding MOAA's major accomplishments specific to military retirees go to the MOAA website: <https://www.moaa.gov> and search for "Major Legislative Accomplishments".

Do Your Part – Take Action – Be an Advocate

LTC Michael Galaty Jr, USA, RET

The Chaplain's Corner -



In the early Church a controversy developed over what date to celebrate Easter. There were some who thought that it should follow strictly the Jewish calendar that stated the 14th of Nisan (traditional date of Jesus' resurrection) which is the first day after the full moon following the vernal equinox. However, it was thought by others that the most important day of our calendar shouldn't fall on any other day besides a Sunday. So, that is why today the reckoning of the date for Easter is the Sunday following the first full moon of the vernal equinox. I know that is rather technical and probably not something that will get you any brownie points unless you are on Jeopardy. Yet, it is why the date for Easter can vary by over a month.

Could this change at some point by the Pope for the Catholic Church? Yes, but that seems unlikely. Would other Christians follow the changed date or choose a set date each year? That is hard to know.

The Orthodox Church uses a different reckoning for the date of Easter. The Julian Calendar developed by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C. was used for centuries, but it was discovered to be off. So, in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII instituted a calendar that added leap years to correct a miscalculation. Most of the western world adopted the Gregorian calendar.

However, the Orthodox Church continues to use the Julian Calendar, for religious rituals, but the Gregorian calendar for secular activities. Even the current Julian calendar added leap years. But the Julian Calendar is 13 days behind the corresponding Gregorian date. The dating

for Easter in the Orthodox world holds that Easter must fall after the Jewish Passover since that is how the resurrection is described in the scriptures.

I have always thought that the dating of Easter also respects the natural world where sun and moon play a role. Since God created all these things it seems right that everything has to be in perfect alignment for our celebration.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET
Chaplain*

The next meeting, 3 APR, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be oven roasted pork loin with apple chutney served with two 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 David Coole from the Florida Department of Transportation. He will talk about developments in Volusia County.

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

REMEMBER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO EAT A MEAL TO ATTEND THE MEETING.

Safety begins with YOU :::: Have an idea, please share it, email us at D5-safetyideas@dot.state.fl.us

Upcoming Meeting: 3 APR 2024
Following Meeting: 1 MAY 2024
Upcoming Board Meeting: 10 APR 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"



Nominations for WVMC Slate of Officers for 2024

The following Slate of Officers and Directors for West Volusia MOAA Chapter (WVMC) (FL30) is proposed by the nominating committee and recommended for approval to govern the WVMC for terms that will begin at the May 2024 meeting thru May 2025.

ELECTED POSITION:

President LTC Laura Wickett
1st Vice CAPT Suzanne Bonner
2nd Vice MAJ Raul Gonzalez
Secretary LtCol Twila Davis
Treasurer Maj Pete Durnell
Director COL Jack Burtnett
Director Maj Curt Voelbel
Director MAJ Shirley Burtnett

APPOINTED BY PRESIDENT.

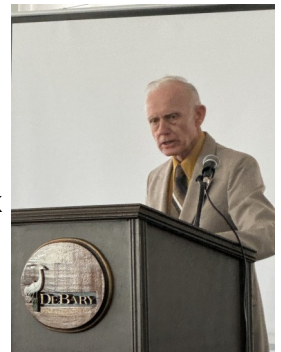
Recommend the following members be appointed by the President to fill the position indicated:

Chaplain LtCol Chris Hoffmann
Surviving Spouse Liaison Mrs. Lisa Hightower
Chief of Staff Maj Curt Voelbel
Newsletter Editor COL Jack Burtnett
Membership Chair Maj Curt Voelbel
Webmaster MAJ Raul Gonzalez
Scholarship Liaison LTC Laura Wickett
Personal Affairs LtCol Twila Davis
Legislative Chair LTC Michael Galaty
Community Relations CWO4 Thomas Jackson
Immediate Past President MAJ Raul Gonzalez

Col Jim Winter, USAF, RET
Chairman, Nominating Committee

MARCH GUEST SPEAKER—

Al Everson, a key staff member of the West Volusia Beacon, gave an interesting talk to the WVMC attendees. Al talked about the MIA's from the World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War. Thank you, Al.



Passing of Rutha Corley

Rutha was the beloved wife of WVMC member LTC Milt Corley, USA, RET. Rutha was born in Quincy, FL; she and Milt got married in December 1967. Milt and Rutha have two sons.

The Corleys were regular attendees at our luncheons. Rutha, you will be missed by all of your WVMC friends, but we know you are with the Lord.



Latest FCoC Convention Update =

West Volusia MOAA Chapter members please, please, register for the May FCoC Convention in Daytona Beach RIGHT NOW! The number of rooms we have had set aside for us will soon expire and once they do the cost of a night's stay at the Shores Resort & Spa increases significantly – and will be on an as available basis. Go to flmoaa.org to register. If you happen to go to the old FCoC web site at moaafl.org there will be a link to the current web site. Do it NOW!


While you are considering attending the convention remember that as the hosts for this convention, we are also responsible for producing the convention magazine. This publication will have the convention agenda and some other relative information and – new this year – an opportunity for you to honor a loved one, a relative, a friend, or an organization, or indeed anyone or anything worthy of being honored. This is in the form of a “brick”, a small, outlined area (a brick) which can hold 5 lines of text or 125 characters. Just text please as pictures or graphics cannot be accommodated. The cost to buy a brick is only \$15. The collection of bricks received will be published in the convention magazine for all attendees to see. Contact Raul to order your special brick of honor.

For the magazine we are also collecting ads that will go into publication. Ad space comes in different sizes and costs and is a great way for a local business to get their name in front of a MOAA crowd. If you know of a business or any entity who would benefit from this kind of exposure, please let Raul know so he can follow up.

Finally, we ask that you search your “resources”, both in your house and without,

for items that would be acceptable as a “silent auction” piece. The silent auction will take place during the convention and money from the winning bids will go towards supporting both the FCoC and our chapter. Lisa Hightower and Karen Clay are in charge of this effort so please let them know if you have something, or know of someone who has something, that would be suitable as a silent auction item.

*Maj Pete Durnell, USAF, RET
2024 Convention Planner*




**VOLUSIA VALOR
DAYS**

A WEEKEND HONORING OUR NATION'S HEROES

MAY 4 - 5, 2024
VOLUSIA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
DELAND, FL

**AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE OF WWII TANK & ARTILLERY
DEMONSTRATIONS, WWII HISTORIC BATTLE
REENACTMENTS, LIVING HISTORY CAMPS & DISPLAYS,
AND MEMORABLE DISPLAYS OF FIRST RESPONDER
VEHICLES AND MILITARY VEHICLES OF ALL ERAS.**

FREE EVENT

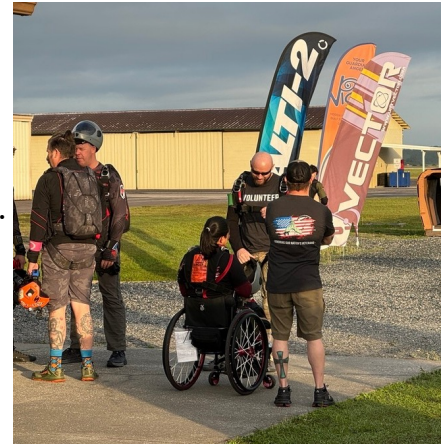


Parachutes for Patriots and Gabi—

The Parachutes for Patriots event was held on 23 March at the DeLand Airport. Gabi was one of the 'jumpers'. Gabi had been a combat medic and was injured in Iraq in 2006. She had shrapnel lodged in her spine, but the doctors removed **most** of it but not all of it. Very small pieces were still in her back. Recently, they attempted to remove the rest; the operation did not go as planned, and Gabi was paralyzed. She was medically retired in 2022. She now resides in Houston, TX, where a local support group set her up with the Parachutes for Patriots jump.



Gabi awaiting the plane.



Gabi and other jumpers
Boarding the aircraft.

Gabi hooked up tandem
Coming in for a landing.



Gabi with a big smile after
her jump.



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.

Notice of Annual Meeting: WVMC will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, 1 May 2024 at the DeBary Country Club. All members are encouraged to attend.

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.

The Orlando VA Health Care System (OVAHCS) will hold an open house event for the new Daytona Beach VA Clinic from 3:00PM to 5:00PM on April 25, 2024. The event will take place onsite at 1776 N. Williamson Blvd., offering an exclusive opportunity for the public to explore the clinic and learn more about the comprehensive care and resources available for Veterans and their families.



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at every stage.**

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 Committed to our members and veterans.
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