



# The Volusia Officers Call

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

An Affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America



**Vol 33, No 5, JAN 2025**

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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—**



The year 2024 is sharply ending. This is when we tend to reflect on what we did the past year and what do we want to do in the next. This past year this country experienced a tumultuous political year. Too often it pitted family members and friends against one another. The Middle East is still uneasy, and its future is still questionable.

Some of our personal finances were strained and some of us, physically, had to make some changes.

In amongst all our activities we lost a few fellow members who will genuinely be missed. Several of our members worked so tirelessly to produce the finest of annual FCOC conventions. We supported several other veterans' groups, our membership volunteered countless hours, and we gave a young Specialist a financial gift that would help him and his family through the holiday season.

What do we look forward to doing this coming year? We will continue to support the Barracks of Hope with nonperishable food and clothing, we will continue to support the Salvation Army with nonperishable food items, we will participate in the annual Veterans Day Parade, we will continue to reach out to other veterans groups, to support the Scholarship Program and deliver our leadership awards to four local high schools.

With your help I look forward to developing other creative ways to work within our community and recruiting younger members. I truly feel blessed to be a member of this outstanding organization, and to develop lifelong friendships.

Happy New Year!!

LTC Laura Wickett, USA, RET  
President

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**MOAA Take Action Center -**

<http://takeaction.moaa.org>

**Legislative -****Congress Opens 119<sup>th</sup> Session with More Veterans Than 2 Years Ago**

Congress opened the new year on January 3, 2025, with 100 members who have prior military experience, three more than the last session and the largest total of veteran lawmakers on Capitol Hill in eight years. But it won't stay that way for long. That's because two of next session's veterans — Ohio Republican Sen. JD Vance and Florida Republican Rep. Michael Waltz — are expected to step down to take other roles in government. Vance was elected vice president in last November's election, and Waltz was selected by President-elect Trump to be his national security adviser.

Even with those subtractions, the one-member increase in veterans from Congress' 118th session to 119th session is a surprise, given a 5% drop in veteran candidates who won primaries this year.

"Fifty years ago, Vietnam veterans were significantly less likely to be elected to Congress compared to their civilian peers, Seth Lynn, founder of Veterans Campaign said. "Although there is still room for improvement, this underscores a remarkable turnaround in the relationship between America and its veterans."

After Vance and Waltz depart, the 98 remaining veterans in Congress will include 19 Senate members and 79 House lawmakers.

(Continued on page 6)

**Credit Cards now accepted—**

Credit cards are now accepted for our luncheons. The meal cost using a credit card is \$25. The additional one dollar is to pay the servicing company that processes the credit cards. The meal cost if paying by cash or check is still \$24.

***Last Meeting (6 NOV 2024) -***

President LTC Laura Wickett called the meeting to order at 1146 hours.

Attendance: 26

Maj Curt Voelbel gave the invocation followed by The Pledge of Allegiance.

LTC Wickett welcomed our members and guests: MAJ Lorraine Holland, USA, (Ret) FCoC East Central VP, and Dr. Harold Borrero-Almodovar- guest speaker.

Lunch was served: Beef Brisket sandwich with Coleslaw, Baked Beans, and Peach Cobbler for dessert.

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

Ms. Karen Wiltuck won the free lunch for the 8 JAN 2025 meeting/luncheon.

LTC Michael Magee introduced our guest speaker Dr. Harold Borrero-Almodovar. Dr. Borrero-Almodovar is a distinguished professional dedicated to enhancing veteran's services and advancing healthcare education. He has been serving as the Program Specialist for Veterans Outreach Programs at the Orlando VA Healthcare System, where he plays a critical role in promoting awareness about essential services and benefits like the PACT Act. Harold's dedication to veteran advocacy is also evident in his roles on the Orange County and Orlando City Mayor's Veterans Councils where he actively works to ensure that veterans and their families receive the support they deserve. Having honorably served in the United States Navy, he remains passionate about ensuring every veteran receives the benefits they have earned,

Dr. Borrero-Almodovar has been with the VA for 10 years. His focus is community outreach events to provide education and contact information to Veterans so they can gain access to VA health care, Exposure to different chemicals during military service i.e. Agent Orange, Tear Gas Chambers, Burn Pits, Firefighting

Foam etc. impacts veterans' health and information about these items are shared. Approximately 1.2 million Veterans signed up for PACT Act exposures. Because of this, claims are backed up about 5 years. Dr. Borrero-Almodovar is hoping the VA Budget will be expanded to allow hiring of more claim's adjustors.

The Orlando VA Health Care System received a 5 Star Rating. The highest rating in the nation.

The Orlando VA Healthcare System offers: Women's Health Care, Homeless Program Support, Social Workers, Respite Caregivers Support, Recreational Therapy and Art Therapy, Whole Health and Nutrition, Acupuncture and Chiropractic Care. The Orlando VA serves approximately 150,000 Veterans.

It is important that every Veteran enrolls in the VA Health System because the government funds the VA by enrollment numbers. Please share this with every Veteran.

LTC Wickett presented Dr. Borrero-Almodovar with a certificate of appreciation and thanked him for speaking to us today.

LTC Wickett asked if there were any corrections to the 2 OCT 2024 Luncheon Meeting Minutes as posted in the VOC. Motion to approve the minutes as posted in the VOC was made by CW04 Thomas Jackson and seconded by Ms. Lisa Hightower. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. LTC Wickett reminded the membership that we are collecting non-perishable foods for the Salvation Army, and gently used, clean clothes for men, and hygiene goody bags for the Barracks of Hope. We also collect monetary donations for our JROTC Scholarship Fund and for Veteran's causes.
2. Our Chapter will have a float in the Volusia County Veterans Day Parade in DeLand on 9 NOV 2024. We will meet in the parking lot of the First Baptist Church, 725 N. Woodland Blvd, Deland at 0800. Members are invited to ride on the float.

(Continued on page 4)

**Last Meeting - continued from page 3**

3. LTC Wickett announced there will be a burial ceremony for CAPT Hank Clay, USN, on 25 November 2024 at 1100 hours at Oakdale Cemetery; and one for Capt Marshall Vance, USMC, on 10 December 2024 at 1300 hours at Bushnell National Cemetery.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. LTC Wickett announced there will not be a WVMC Membership Luncheon meeting in December. Our next membership meeting will be 8 JAN 2025.
2. LTC Wickett announced there will be a Veteran's Day Ceremony at Bill Dreggors Park on Monday, November 11, 2024 at 9:00am.

LTC Wickett called for reports:

Secretary's Report: LtCol Twila Davis-reminded the Board members to review the WVMC By-laws and bring recommended edits to the Board meeting next Wednesday.

Treasurer's Report: Maj Pete Durnell reported the checking account balance as of 30 OCT 2024 is \$ 3,245.31 and \$ 12,741.56 in savings. Treasurers report is given for informational purpose and is subject to audit.

Directors and Committee Reports:

1<sup>st</sup> VP /Speaker Coordinator-LTC Michael Magee - stated he has pocket booklets of The U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence to give to anyone interested.

2nd VP - MAJ Raul Gonzalez:

1. The FCoC Leadership Training/Mini Convention will be held at the Rosen Centre Hotel 17-19 January 2025. All members are invited to attend; go to FLMOAA.org to register.
2. MAJ Gonzalez stated we will meet at the corner of Oakdale and Woodland Blvd at 0800 on 9 NOV 24 for the Veterans Day parade.
3. After the Veterans Day Parade in Deland on

9 NOV 2024 at 3:00pm, our Chapter will be honoring Veterans at the Grand Villa Nursing home. Members are invited to attend.

4. See MAJ Gonzalez if you would like a name tag. They are \$15.00
5. The WVMC Christmas Party will be on 14 DEC 2024 5:00pm-8:00pm at American Legion Post 6. Cost is \$20 per person. Flyers are on the table. Reservations are required. POC is MAJ Gonzalez.
6. MOAA National Roundtable Zoom Meeting is 21 NOV 2024. Go to MOAA.org to register.
7. Happy 249th Birthday to the U.S. Marine Corps on 10 NOV

Director - COL Jack Burtnett - nothing to report

Director - Maj Curt Voelbel - nothing to report

Director - MAJ Shirley Burtnett - stated the members are welcome to ride the float in the Veterans Day parade and those that have done it in the past have had fun.

Scholarship Chair - MAJ Pam Ring - excused

Legislative Chair - LTC Mike Galaty - nothing to report

Chief of Staff and Membership Chair - Maj Curt Voelbel - stated we have 58 members and our new goal is 60 members. Please keep recruiting.

Community Relations - CW4 Thomas Jackson - stated Barracks of Hope is not taking donations of women's clothing at this time.

Chaplain - CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann - excused

Editor - COL Jack Burtnett - nothing to report

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

Personal Affairs - LtCol Twila Davis - nothing to report

(Continued on page 6)

## Membership -

At the end of each year, the Board has the unpleasant task of dropping members who have not renewed their dues. We are in the process of making phone calls to these folks and will report our final membership strength at our Jan luncheon. When you are ready to renew your annual \$35 dues, you may pay with Cash, Check, or Credit Card at the November luncheon or by calling our Treasurer, Pete Durnell at 321-443-6264. If mailing your payment, send a check made out to WVMC and send it to at 319 E. Victoria Hills Blvd., DeLand, FL 32724.

### Reason to be a Chapter Member – We “Never Stop Serving”!

Make yourself heard by letting legislators know what is on your mind/influence legislation that benefit all active duty military and Veterans.

Give back to our community.

Expand your social opportunities.

Network with fellow officers.

Stay informed of national issues.

Find camaraderie with a purpose.

Do a friend a favor—If you know of someone eligible to be a Chapter Member, tell them about us and point them to our Website: [WV MOAA Chapter](#) and Curt Voelbel at 386-479-3400 or [LgtCurt@gmail.com](mailto:LgtCurt@gmail.com). 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. When on the website, scroll down to join.

Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET  
Membership

## From the Chief of Staff -

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

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. **Please bring to each luncheon “Hygiene Bags” filled with Toothpaste, Brush, Shampoo, Soap, Deodorant, etc. in a plastic Zip bag.**

Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET  
Chief of Staff

## Member Responsibility for Luncheons

We have been having a problem and need your help. People have been committing to come to the WVMC luncheon and not showing up. When we order the meals based on the number of people who have said they are coming, we must pay for them whether everyone shows up or not. “People making reservations for the luncheon/meeting are expected to pay unless they cancel their reservation before the Friday prior to the luncheon.” If there is a legitimate reason, please notify Maj Curt Voelbel at [LgtCurt@gmail.com](mailto:LgtCurt@gmail.com) or call him at 386 479-3400, ASAP. If he has time to cancel the reservation, he will; if not, he will bring the situation to the Board of Directors for disposition.



**Guest Speaker's Bio—**

Zach Zacharias is a Native Floridian born and raised in Miami, Florida. He holds degrees from Florida State University with a degree in communications, University of Central Florida with a degree in American history, and Nova Southeastern University with a master's in education. Zach has worked for 30 years at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach and until recently oversaw the educational programming at the museum and has worked with exhibits such as Picasso, Salvadori Dali, Dale Chihuly, Glories of Ancient Egypt, Great Asian Dinosaurs World War II, and many more!

Zach is a current member on the Volusia County Historic Preservation Board and is the current chair. Zacharias has created programs at the museum such as, Florida History Con, Natural History Festival, Afternoon with Florida History, Volusia Collects, September with the Smithsonian, and many other programs. Zach has given lectures and presentations all over Central and North Florida on various Florida history topics.

Zach Specializes in Florida History, Florida natural history and Florida historical landscapes. He has self-published on a book on Florida forts titled "Florida Forts on the Edge of Empire" Zach is a cast member of a local PBS Show with 21 episodes called the Fossil Hunters about fossilizing in Florida. Zach is a member of Deland Lunch Rotary is a Paul Harris Fellow and Rotarian of the Year for 2019 and 2022.

Recently Zach appeared as an expert historian on the Travel Channel's history show "Caribbean Pirate Gold" starring members of the famous Jacque Cousteau Family. In 2011 Zach excavated an almost complete Mastodon Elephant in Daytona Beach now on display in the Museum. In December of 2023 Zach received the Museum's highest award the Henry Saltzman Award for distinguished commitment to enriching the cultural and educational climate of Volusia County. In February of 2024 Zach received the Halifax Historical Society's Partner of the Year.

Zach lives in Deland with his wife Allison and has a son at Yale University School of Environmental

Engineering working on a PhD. Zach's daughter recently graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in wildlife ecology. Zach has three horses, six alpacas, three mini-donkeys and a cattle dog. Zach is an accomplished and long time tennis player.

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

LTC Wickett announced there is a car show at the American Legion Post 6, DeLand on 9 NOV 2024 from 12:00 pm-3:00pm.

Col Jim Winter and LTC Mike Galaty will be honoring Veterans of John Knox Village on Veterans Day.

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

Our next luncheon meeting will be 8 January 2025 1100 hours at the DeBary Country Club.

Meeting adjourned at 1333 hours.

*LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET*  
*Secretary*

**Legislative—continued from page 2**

Next year's Congress will feature the largest total of women veterans ever, with nine.

Input for this article originally appeared in the [Military Times](#), the nation's largest independent newsroom dedicated to covering the military and veteran community.

To keep connected, ensure you are [registered as an advocate](#) at the MOAA Legislative Action Center.

**Do Your Part – Take Action- Contact Your Representative – Be an Advocate**

*LTC Michael Galaty Jr, USA, RET*  
*Legislative*

## The Chaplain's Corner -



### What Makes for a Strong Family—

This time of year it is hard not to think of children and family life. Christmas is recalling the birth of Christ. Jesus came to this earth not full grown, but as a baby. He entered our world as we all do.

Maybe our starting point is to ask what makes for a strong family. We know that in the best families, parents spend time with their children while not neglecting their spousal relationship. I can imagine that Mary and Joseph showed kindness and affection to each other. They worked together to provide for themselves and their child. They would have celebrated religious events with each other and their relatives in Galilee.

Communication should be supportive in a good family. Husbands and wives don't bark orders at each other but listen with care and attention to each other. Parents and spouses show support and thanks when a family member helps with family tasks without being asked. They are supportive when a child learns a new task or takes up a sport. When children need to ask questions, they are treated with respect.

Children are curious about many things. They want to know how their parents met. What family customs are important and why? They want to know why the world is the way it is. Jesus was an astute observer of nature, often telling parables about seeds, wheat, and harvesting. I suspect that Mary and Joseph shared many stories with Jesus and taught him to watch and learn nature and from others.

Strong families aren't those that never have problems, but ones that learn they can work together to overcome obstacles. Children need to learn they can be resilient when they are rejected by a classmate or do poorly on an exam. Children see that parents can disagree, but still love each other. Sickness and suffering are a part of life as

much as laughter and fun. Caring for one another at a difficult time and supporting each other makes life great. I'm sure the death of his cousin John would have grieved Jesus deeply. Yet, Jesus continued his mission knowing that God was in charge and that He would provide what is needed to thrive through it all.

Forgiveness and patience are necessary in any relationship. Family members can cause pain or difficulty without even realizing it. Children at play can lose track of time or forget to do their chores. When Dad is working on a project in the garage, he might clean up in the kitchen sink which Mom just cleaned. Jesus, when he was a boy, stayed behind in Jerusalem even after his parents had left the city. Yet, once he was reunited, Jesus was obedient to his parents. So, perhaps Jesus discovered that family life is great but it takes work. He handed that on to us. Let us live the best life we can.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET  
Chaplain*



The next meeting, 8 JAN, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be chicken Milanese w/lemon caper cream sauce and two sides. There will also be a dessert. The lunch cost is **\$24** per meal if paid by cash or check; \$25 if paid with a credit card. We ask that if paid with cash exact change helps. Our guest speaker will be Zach Zacharis. Zach is the Senior Curator of Education and Curator of History at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach. He will be talking about Florida Forts: on the Edge of Empire. From personal experience, Zach is a very interesting speaker.

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

**Upcoming Meeting: 8 JAN 2025**

**Following Meeting: 5 FEB 2025**

**Upcoming Board Meeting: 15 JAN 2025**

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 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](mailto:volusiaofficerscall@gmail.com)

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

New name tags are available from MAJ Raul Gonzalez at the monthly meetings or by contacting him at: [majgonz@earthlink.net](mailto:majgonz@earthlink.net). The cost is \$15.

Check out **OUR** website at [www.wvmoaa.org](http://www.wvmoaa.org) 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.**

**OUR NEXT MEETING IS 8 JAN 2025.**

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 386-668-11705 x1 [Lynn@debarycc.com](mailto:Lynn@debarycc.com)





### *Certificate of Appreciation to FLANG Receptient*

SP4 Nathaniel Moore of the 1/265 ADA, FLANG, 2nd from left, is presented with a check for \$500 and a certificate of Appreciation for his dedication and service to the Florida Army National Guard unit in DeLand. The check and certificate were presented by LTC Laura Wickett, USA, RET, president of the WVMC, 2nd from right.

### *Pictures from the WVMC 2024 Christmas Party*

A little fun with karaoke singing by Santa (Raul Gonzalez), and his elfs (Laura Wickett and Aurora Voelbel)



Folks enjoying their dinner. From left, edge of Dick Schuler, Tom and Karen Jackson, Pete Durnell, and Frances Gonzalez. Note the plug for the American Legion (Post 6, Adam Quinn), above Frances' head.

Folks still enjoying dinner. The other edge of Dick, Bert and Twila Davis, Chuck and Judy McLaughlin, Jack and Shirley Burtnett.



## ***WVMC Bylaws Review 2024-2025***

**The Bylaws must be reviewed by the membership and will be voted on during the January general meeting on 8 January 2025. The proposed Bylaws are sent with this newsletter as a separate item.**

Summary of recommended edits:

Preamble: add "for" after advocate

change "adequate to the defense of our country" to "adequate to defend our country"

change "present" to "preserve"

Article VI Dues Section 3 it is recommended that we change:

"notified of their delinquency by the Secretary" to "notified of their delinquency by the Membership Chair"

"fail to make payment by 1 DEC" to "fail to make payment by 31 DEC"

"made by the Board of Directors at their December meeting" to "Drop decisions are finalized by the Board of Directors at their January Meeting."

made by the Board of Directors at their January meeting"

Section X Committees, Section 1, last sentence delete "except the Nominating Committee"