



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—



By the time you receive this edition of the VOC, we will have celebrated all the major holidays of the season. I hope they were enjoyable and relaxing for you.

As so many of you know, our chapter has been very busy this year with a number of activities focused on the veterans in our community. We can still do so much more.

This year I would like you, the membership, to focus on events in which we can raise the funds necessary to continue our efforts to support programs like Habitat for Humanity, Barracks of Hope, and other veteran service organizations.

I would like to see our chapter be able to offer more than one \$2,000 scholarship to worthy students. All this can be done by increasing the amount we donate in each of our jars at the luncheon meeting and through fundraising activities. Every little bit helps.

I understand that finances can be tight for those of us on a fixed income that is why I am stressing the importance of fund-raising activities. The fund-raising activity committee is myself, LTC Galaty, LTC Magee, MAJ Durnell and MAJ Gonzalez. Please feel free to contact any one of us with your ideas.

Please join me in this effort to be more involved in our community and creating ideas for fundraising activities.

It is my wish that the New Year brings good health and happiness to us all, our country and our veterans and service members. May God continue to bless us with wisdom and sound judgement.

LTC Laura Wickett, USA, RET
President

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APPOINTED POSITIONS**Chief of Staff:**

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Scholarship:

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MOAA Take Action Center -

<http://takeaction.moaa.org>

Legislative -**Legislative Advocacy Priorities for 2026:**

While MOAA hasn't published a formal 2026 advocacy agenda document yet, ongoing priorities from its *Advocacy in Action* campaigns and legislative work will carry forward into the new year. These include major national issues MOAA continues to push on Capitol Hill.

Key Legislative and Advocacy Focus Areas:

Military spouse employment: Supporting the *Military Spouse Hiring Act* to expand hiring incentives for military spouses by adding them to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Improved health care access: Pushing for better reporting and navigation systems in the *Military Health System* to reduce barriers to care for service members and families

Toxic exposure reform: Continuing to advocate to "end the wait" for toxic-exposed veterans to receive benefits and care

Better military housing oversight: Advocating for transparency and reporting requirements to improve conditions and accountability

Caregiver support: Supporting legislation such as the *Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act*.

These issues are currently in progress and will likely be sustained advocacy themes for 2026, as MOAA prepares to engage with the **119th Congress**.

In addition, MOAA is actively tracking **FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**

outcomes – including pay raises, PCS expenses reporting, and health care protections – and pushing for final enactment and implementation of provisions important to its members.

You can make a difference

Sign Up for Legislative Alerts @ MOAA org to stay informed.

Together, we can ensure that the promises made to our service members are honored with action not just words.

LTC Michael Galaty Jr, USA, RET

Legislative

Last Meeting (5 NOV 2025) -

President LTC Laura Wickett called the meeting to order at 1143 hours.

Attendance: 22

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

LTC Wickett welcomed our members and guests: Dr. Jeremy Gordon and his COO Kimberly Dunn.

Lunch was served: Grilled Chicken with Honey Dijon Sauce, Rice, Green Beans and Ice Cream Sundae for dessert.

LTC Wickett asked COL Jack Burtnett that the 50/50 drawings be done at this time. Then the members' free lunch drawing.

LTC Ernie Tauber won the free lunch for the 7 JAN 2026 meeting/luncheon.

LTC Wickett introduced our guest speaker Dr. Jeremy Gordon. After growing up in DeLand, Dr. Jeremy Gordon attended Florida State University and National College of Chiropractic. Upon returning to DeLand in 1999, Dr. Gordon began his private practice which has grown into what is today one of the largest chiropractic clinics in the State of Florida - DeLand Chiropractic & Spinal Decompression. Dr. Gordon has served as President of the Florida Chiropractic Association in 2013 and 2021 and has received the FCA's Chiropractor of the Year award in 2007 and 2011, the only 2x winner of this prestigious award.

Dr. Gordon talked about the Top 5 Myths in Healthcare:

Myth #1 Chiropractors only treat neck and back pain - they treat sports injuries, injuries from auto accidents, work related injuries, headaches, balance and coordination and they work to optimize patients' health and wellness.

Myth # 2 All dietary supplements are the same - capsules are absorbed better than tablets, standardized extracts vs whole herbs, they should be evaluated by independent laboratory testing, you get what you pay for.

Myth #3 High Cholesterol=Heart Disease - cholesterol is necessary for maintaining brain health, low cholesterol = an increase in Alzheimer's disease and neuro degeneration, lipid

particle size is very important to determine good and bad cholesterol, Coronary CT Angiogram is a very good test to determine heart health, Statin drugs are a huge money maker for pharmaceutical companies.

Myth #4 Blood sugar and Hemoglobin A1C tell the whole story - not: a better blood test is fasting insulin.

Myth #5 Salt is Bad - not: Recommended Daily Allowance is 2,300mg - about a heaping teaspoon - most of us do not get that much. Symptoms of low salt= muscle cramps, low energy, fatigue, brain fog. Pickle juice is a good source of salt and electrolyte blends.

LTC Wickett thanked Dr. Gordon for a very informative presentation.

LTC Wickett asked if there were any corrections to the 1 OCT 2025 Luncheon Meeting Minutes as posted in the VOC. Motion to approve the minutes as posted in the VOC was made by LTC Ernie Tauber and seconded by MAJ Pam Ring. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. LTC Wickett stated our Chapter is still in need of a Treasurer. Maj Pete Durnell will be moving back to England when the sale of his house is finalized. Maj Durnell said he will be happy to show the new Treasurer the duties required of the position.
2. LTC Wickett announced we will have a float in the DeLand Veteran's Day Parade on Saturday 8 NOV 2025. We will meet in the parking lot of First Baptist Church, 725 N. Woodland Blvd, DeLand at 0800 to decorate the float. Bring a cooler to sit on - no hay bales available this year.
3. LTC Wickett stated there will be a Veterans Day Event at Bill Dreggors Park, 230 N. Stone St, DeLand on 11 NOV 2025 at 0900 hours. Everyone is invited to attend. This event is sponsored by the two local American Legions.
4. LTC Wickett announced the Chapter will be having a Holiday Party on 6 Dec 2025 at Cooks Carriage House from 4:00pm-8:00pm. RSVP with meal choice to Maj Pete Durnell NLT 30 NOV 2025. There will be a holiday sweater contest and gift exchange.
5. LTC Wickett stated Halifax Chapter will be hosting a Holiday Gala 18 DEC 2025 and has

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Last Meeting - continued from page 3

extended an invitation to our chapter. It is a formal event. RSVP NLT 1 DEC 2025 to Andrew Hoffman at drewhoffman49@gmail.com or 385-562-3325.

6. There was a Proclamation for Veterans Day at the city council meeting on 4 NOV 2025 it was well attended by local veterans.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. MAJ Pam Ring stated today at the City Hall in DeBary they will announce the names of the 8 new Hometown Heroes Banners. Members are invited.

2. CWO4 Thomas Jackson announced the Wreaths Across America program for Bushnell: there are 137,000 graves at that site and last year there were less than 30,000 wreaths placed. They are accepting donations. You can donate at their website www.wreathsacrossamerica.org. The wreaths will be placed on graves on Saturday 13 DEC 2025.

LTC Wickett 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 1 NOV 2025 is \$ 2,854.77 and \$ 1,257.71 in savings. There is a 12/month CD#1 of \$ 6,182.21 and a 2nd CD of \$ 4,040.53. Total assets of \$ 14,335.22. Note: \$2000.00 is earmarked for a JROTC Scholarship and \$500 for Barracks of Hope or other Veterans charity. Treasurers report is given for informational purpose and is subject to audit.

Directors and Committee Reports:

1st VP - LTC Michael Magee - excused.

2nd VP - MAJ Raul Gonzalez - excused.

Directors and Committee Reports:

Jack Burtnett – Director - nothing to report.

Maj Curt Voelbel - Director – excused.

MAJ Shirley Burtnett – Director – encouraged everyone to come to the Veterans Day parade this Saturday.

MAJ Pam Ring - Scholarship Chair – stated she

sent out the JROTC Scholarship letters to all the West Volusia High Schools. She plans to meet the instructors or guidance counselors in person to discuss awards.

LTC Mike Galaty - Legislative Chair – excused.

Maj Curt Voelbel – Chief of Staff and Membership Chair – excused; we currently have 52 members. The goal is 60.

CW4 Thomas Jackson - Community Relations – Barracks of Hope is not accepting any clothing at this time. They are accepting food and toiletry bags. Some of our members attended the Habitat for Humanity Homes for Veterans fund raiser gala. They raised \$100,000.00 for the Veterans homes. They are always looking for volunteers please check out their website at <https://wvhabitat.org>.

CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann – Chaplain - stated in this day and age we are so very busy it is hard to enjoy life as it was designed. Sabbath is a day to abstain from work-a day of rest. We need to get back to observing the Sabbath.

COL Jack Burtnett – Editor – nothing to report.

LTC Michael Magee - Speaker Coordinator - excused. CW05 Ted Stevens stated that LTC Houser will be the speaker for the JAN 2026.

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

LtCol Twila Davis - Personal Affairs Officer - stated she sent get-well cards to Maj Curt Voelbel, CAPT Suzanne Bonner and Stan Wickett.

GOOD of the CHAPTER

LtCol Davis stated some of our members set up a table at the Deland car show on the 3rd Saturday of October to recruit members and receive donations for veterans causes. This will be a recurring monthly event starting in December. Members are invited to join us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LTC Wickett announced:

American Legion Post 6 of Deland will be having a car show on 8 NOV 2025 at 1200 hours. Everyone is invited to attend.

(Continued on page 7)

Membership -

The chapter started CY 2025 with 48 members. We added 7 new members. Only one members elected not to renew and with 2 passing, finished the year with 52 members, a net gain of 4. Your recruiting of new members was outstanding this year, and it is much appreciated by all and will certainly be noted by our Florida Council of Chapters and MOAA National.

This is great news, but we cannot take our foot off the gas in our recruiting efforts. So, our challenge to meet our goal of 55 will take continual and intentional recruiting of new members. Although we have already started planning some events that will target new members, it is the efforts of all of you that has proven successful in the past. We implore you to get the word out, talk to friends and associates, neighbors, church members, even in public places. If you see someone wearing a military hat or T-Shirt, start a conversation, meet a new friend, and if they happen to be an officer, invite them to our next luncheon and have them contact Maj. Curt Voelbel @ 386-479-3400 or LgtCurt@gmail.com.

As military officers, it is our duty to not only to take care of the troops—Veterans, those currently serving, family members, and military inclined students but each other as well. That includes hosting social events and being there at critical times such as providing support to those who are hurting or on the death of a spouse. Remember, the larger our numbers, the greater our impact on our community and advocacy.

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

1. Make yourself heard by letting legislators know what is on your mind/influence legislation that benefit all active duty military and Veterans.
2. Give back to our community.
3. Expand your social opportunities.
4. Network with fellow officers.
5. Stay informed of national issues.
6. Find camaraderie with a purpose.

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. Cash donations may be dropped in the buckets at the door for Veteran’s Causes and JR ROTC Scholarships.

Sample tee shirts and hats with our local chapter logo will be on display for you to purchase or order. Military logo bracelets are also quite popular and for sale.

Veterans Causes

We 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. Additionally, we will collect unexpired Pantry items for them.

Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET
Chief of Staff



The Chaplain's Corner -**New Year's Resolutions**

It seems that many people either make New Year's resolutions or believe they should. I suppose at the heart of a resolution is accepting that the previous year was lacking in something. Maybe we look back and realize we didn't accomplish the tasks we had hoped to do or visited the new places we wanted to see, or maybe worst of all is neglecting our duties to God and others.

I will be the first one to admit that I am not good at fashioning resolutions at the beginning of the year or the beginning of Lent. I often think that I should resolve to pray more, read more scripture, visit the homebound, or be more aware of people's needs. But, I have also learned that fashioning a resolution without a specific goal with measurable results often leads to doing nothing.

I found the following resolutions online that might help in getting started.

A) Resolve to draw nearer to God.

1. By having a daily reading program of God's living and abiding Word. Read one paragraph or page of scripture each day for 30 days.
2. By being diligent in prayer to recharge our spiritual batteries by praying one new prayer this year each day.

B) Resolve to draw closer to others.

1. By making it a point to learn one name of someone you don't know in your community, church, or social group.
2. By inviting a different person or family to your home each month.
3. By visiting a different person or family each month.

The Best New Year Gifts:

To your friend – loyalty. To your enemy –

forgiveness.

To your boss – service. To a child - a good example.

To your parents - gratitude and devotion.

To your mate - love and faithfulness.

To all men and women – love.

To God - your life.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET
Chaplain*

NEVER STOP SERVING®



The next meeting, 7 JAN, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be seared cod with lemon dill sauce plus vegetable, starch, rolls, tea and coffee.

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. The guest speaker will be LTC Houser talking about paratroop operations. LTC Houser's bio is on page 11.

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

Upcoming Meeting: 7 JAN 2026
Following Meeting: 4 FEB 2026
Upcoming Board Meeting: 10 DEC 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 1145 followed by an interesting guest speaker, then a short business meeting.

Helen Brandt wants to let the chapter members know that Harvey's funeral service date has been set for Monday, Jan. 26th at 1:00 at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery at Mims. All MOAA members are welcome to attend.

Last Meeting - continued from page 4

Executive Board Meeting will be held on 12 NOV 2025, 1000 hours at the American Legion Post 6. Members are welcome to attend

Our next luncheon meeting will be 7 JAN 2026 1100 hours at the DeBary Country Club.

Meeting adjourned at 1340 hours.

LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET
Secretary

Certificate of Appreciation to FLANG Recipient

On December 6th, the WVMC awarded a check of \$500. To Spc Lexa Chapel, a mother of two and a member of Battery B, 1/265th Air Defense Artillery Battalion.

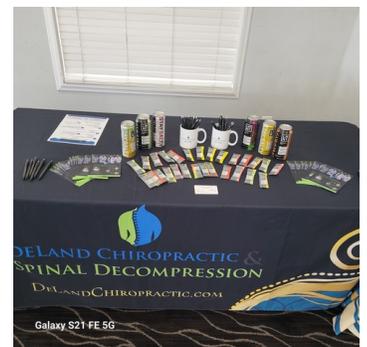


November's Guest Speaker -



Dr Jeremy Gordon of DeLand Chiropractic & Spinal Decompression, gave an extremely interesting and informative talk on holistic health and living.

Some free nutritional items Dr. Gordon brought along for us to sample.



Vietnam Memorial legacy Project -



Mr. Robert Atkins has secured approval for a monument to be added to the Veteran Memorial Plaza on Orange Avenue. The monument is a 7,500 pound granite monument to be constructed by March 29, 2026, Vietnam Veterans Day and to be inducted and dedicated. The monument will be made of the same granite as the Memorial in Washington D.C.. Mr. Adkins's has paid the initial payment of \$50,000. Volusia County has donated \$10,000, for the construction. Mr. Adkins is asking for donations in order to reimburse him for the expense. Checks can be made out to: Mr. Robert Adkins, and mail to : 133 Pelican Dunes Dr. Ormond Beach, Florida. Numbers: 614-395-2727 or Mr. Jerry Kramer, 386-405-0531. Please indicate in the memo line that the check is for the monument.

Halifax Chapter Christmas Party -

The Halifax chapter of MOAA held their annual Christmas formal on Thursday evening 18 Dec at the Halifax Yacht Club. Our West Volusia chapter had three couples attend. The food was excellent and a good time was had by all.



Shirley & Jack Burtnett



Laura and Stan Wickett



Twila and Bert Davis

WVMC Christmas Party -

The WVMC Christmas Party was Held at Cook's Buffet event building on 6 December. The food was excellent and a good time was had by all. The party ended at 2000hrs. so all us old folks could make it home before we fell asleep.



Some of the members having a good time.

Father Chris Hoffmann opening a second present, the first one didn't last long, a bottle of vodka, taken by Lisa Hightower. She lost the bottle shortly afterwards.



Tom Jackson opening his exchange present - a nice throw blanket.

The Ugly Sweater Contest was judged by two of Cook's waitresses. The contestants from left to right: Pete Durnell, Pam Ring, Laura Wickett, Frances Gonzalez, Raul Gonzalez, Twila Davis, Elizabeth Lee, and Curt Voelbel. The winner of the contest was Frances Gonzalez.



WVMC Christmas Party -



Pete Durnell with an ugly sweater. Wow, he went out in public with that on.



Aurora and Curt Voelbel with Curt showing off his ugly sweater.



Laura Wickett with a real contender for the ugliest sweater.



Stan Wickett trying to convince the judges that his sweater is the ugliest.



Bert Davis, Raul and Francis Gonzalez getting the venue ready for the party.

Lieutenant Colonel-Retired Michael T. Houser
Round Canopy Parachuting Team-USA Lead Jumpmaster

LTC (R) Michael Houser was born in Atlanta, Georgia on 4 June 1967. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from Christopher Newport University in 1990 and holds a Master of Science Degree from Central Michigan University. His military education includes Infantry Basic Training, Advanced Infantry Training, the Aviation Officer Basic Course, Army Rotary Wing Course, Airborne School, Ranger School, Air Assault School, Aviation Officer Advanced Course, Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape (High Risk-Combat), Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape (High Risk-Detention), Army Jumpmaster Course, Advanced Land Navigation Course, Instructor Training Course, Small Group Instructor Training Course, Pistol and Carbine Instructor Course, High Performance Driving Instructor Course, and Command and General Staff College (CGSC). He is qualified in numerous military and civilian fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft and has approximately 4000- flight hours with over 1000 combat hours.

Upon completion of the Aviation Officer Basic Course and Initial Entry Rotary Wing Course, LTC Houser was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment at Illesheim, GE. During his tour as a "Fighting Sixth Soldier," he served as an Aeroscout platoon leader, a support platoon leader and an assistant Operations Officer. While assigned to 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry, LTC Houser won the coveted GEN George S. Patton Leader of the Year award in 1995. In May 1996, he assumed command of a Kiowa Warrior Troop in the 1st Squadron (Airborne), 17th Cavalry Regiment, located at Fort Bragg, NC. After serving at Fort Bragg, LTC Houser went to Fort Rucker, AL to be a Small Group Leader at the Aviation Officer Advanced Course and Aviation Officer Basic Course. While assigned to the Basic Course LTC Houser developed and implemented the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Course for pilots and special operations soldiers. In 1999 LTC Houser was invited to attend the Army's premier Special Mission Unit Selection Course. After his training was complete, he served as an Operator at the Unit with deployments worldwide. After graduating from Command and General Staff College in 2004, LTC Houser arrived in 8th Army, Republic of Korea, where he was assigned as the Operations Officer for Deep Operations. His next assignment in 2005 was as the Executive Officer for 1st Battalion (Attack), 25th Aviation Brigade. In June 2006, LTC Houser was instrumental in the transformation of 1-25 Attack BN to 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry where he remained the Executive Officer and Task Force Commander through preparation and deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08.

LTC Houser's notable active duty awards include 2-Bronze Star Medals, 2- Defense Meritorious Service Medals, 3- Army Meritorious Service Medals, 5-Air Medals, 3-Army Commendation Medals, 1- Joint Service Achievement Medal, 4- Army Achievement Medals, the Presidential Unit Citation Award, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Global War On Terror Expeditionary Medal, the Global War On Terror Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Korea Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the NATO Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Order of St. Michael Award, Order of St. George Award, Nijmegen Road March Award, Combat Action Badge, Master Aviator Badge, Ranger Tab, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Thailand Jumpmaster Wings, Chile Jumpmaster Wings, Chilean Free Fall Wings, Colombia Jumpmaster Wings, Colombian Free Fall Wings, Peruvian Jumpmaster Wings and Peruvian Free Fall Wings.

LTC Houser is married to Tammy Farrington of Melbourne, Florida.



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.

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

Check out **OUR** website at 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.



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