



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—



Greetings, we're into the second month of the year, January has come and gone and February comes in with sweetness on Valentines Day.

As I mentioned in the January meeting we will begin to solicit nominations for the slate of officers for 2026-2027 board. Many of our officers have served on the board in a variety of leadership roles for several years. There are many opportunities for other members to step up and become active. I have been in contact with West Volusia Habitat for Humanity, and I have been advised that we will be notified when the building begins on the four Veteran Homes and the volunteer opportunities here in Deland. Many of us can push a paint brush, use a nail gun, or even a table saw. This is such an exciting time for those families and I look forward for the chance for our Chapter to be involved.

Lastly, the board has set up a Fund-Raising Committee to examine ways for us to raise funds that will be used for the benefit of veterans and their families in our community. You may contact any of the following with your ideas and suggestions: Raul Gonzales, Mike Galaty, Michael Magee, Pete Durnell, and myself.

I look forward to seeing you at the February Luncheon Meeting.

LTC Laura Wickett, USA, RET
President

WEST VOLUSIA MOAA CHAPTER
LEADERSHIPOFFICERS**President:**

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APPOINTED POSITIONS**Chief of Staff:**

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Chaplain:

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Legislative:

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Membership:

Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET

Personal Affairs :

LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET

Scholarship:

MAJ Pam Ring, USAR, RET

Program Director:

LTC Michael Magee, USA, RET

Webmaster:

MAJ Raul Gonzalez, FLARNG, RET

VOC Editor:

COL John Burtnett, USA, RET

Surviving Spouse Liaison:

Mrs. Lisa Hightower
386-216-3767 lisamh4550@yahoo.com

MOAA Take Action Center -

<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

Legislative -**Legislative Advocacy Update – February 2026**

At the end of 2025, Congress passed the FY 2026 NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act), and it was signed into law – a major advocacy priority for MOAA and the uniformed services community. This must-pass defense policy bill includes many provisions that directly impact military members, families, retirees, and survivors, such as family support programs, housing safety initiatives, healthcare and TRICARE improvements, and expanded support for military families and education.

Key highlights in the NDAA include:

1. Continued expansion of family and deployment-related support, such as extending in-home child care fee assistance and enhanced notification requirements for child safety at military childcare centers.
2. TRICARE and healthcare system changes to improve access and provider credentialing.
3. Pilot programs to improve privatized housing conditions and require clearer remediation guidelines.

These NDAA outcomes reflect sustained, year-long advocacy by MOAA and partner organizations to protect and strengthen benefits and quality-of-life programs for the force.

How Members Can Get Involved

Sign up with the Legislative Action Center and participate in advocacy campaigns – including contacting elected officials about ongoing priorities, sharing input, and staying informed about how federal policy decisions affect the military community.

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 (7 JAN 2026) -

President LTC Laura Wickett called the meeting to order at 1145 hours.

Attendance: 33

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

LTC Wickett welcomed our members and guests: LTC Michael Houser and wife Tammy Farrington; new member LTC Lionel "Lee" Hector; Guests of MAJ Pam Ring -CAPT Bobby Rountree, USN, Ret and wife Kathy Rountree prior USAF Officer.

Lunch was served: Seared Cod, Rice Pilaf, Broccoli and Cheesecake for dessert

LTC Wickett asked MAJ Raul Gonzalez that the 50/50 drawings be done at this time. Then the members' free lunch drawing.

LTC Bill Johnson won the free lunch for the 4 FEB 2026 meeting/luncheon.

LTC Wickett introduced our guest speaker: LTC (Ret) 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 is married to Tammy Farrington of Melbourne, Florida.

LTC Houser explained the mission of the Round Canopy Parachute Team USA (RCPT-USA): is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which wishes to highlight the accomplishments of allied paratroopers from WWII onward by fostering camaraderie among individuals who share a passion for round canopy parachuting and inspiration from the actions and deeds of paratroopers past. This is accomplished through partnerships with worldwide RCPT chapters, demonstration and commemoration parachuting activities, and sustainment and training events in the US and around the world. We wish to provide a place which offers standardized and safe parachuting activities and afford a sense of community for our team members. For RCPT, commemorating the past, supporting veterans, and supporting our members makes round canopy parachuting "more than just a jump."

LTC Houser shared photo's and videos of the 80th Anniversary Commemorative Parachute Jump.

LTC Wickett thanked LTC Houser for a very informative presentation about the "80th Anniversary Invasion Association" celebratory parachute jump into Europe on the 80th

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anniversary of D-day. Mike was personally involved in making that happen and made the jump.

LTC Wickett asked if there were any corrections to the 5 NOV 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 LtCol Jim Pugh. 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 reminded the members of the FCOC Leadership Convention 29-31 JAN 2026 at the Rosen Center in Orlando.
3. LTC Wickett encouraged members to provide information to LtCol Twila Davis that they wish to include into our submission to MOAA for the Level of Excellence Award.
4. Edited WVMC Bylaws requires a motion and vote by the membership. A motion was made by LtCol Twila Davis and seconded by MAJ Raul Gonzalez that we approve the recommended edits to the WVMC Bylaws as published in the VOC. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

LTC Wicket announced that MOAA is offering a Health Aging Webinar at 7:00pm tonight.

LTC Wickett called for reports:

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

Treasurer's Report: Maj Pete Durnell -excused.

Directors and Committee Reports:

LTC Michael Magee-nothing to report

2nd VP- MAJ Raul Gonzalez- highlighted an article in the MOAA Magazine- Building Strength and encouraged the members to read it.

Directors

Jack Burtnett-Director- nothing to report

Maj Curt Voelbel -Director - nothing to report

MAJ Shirley Burtnett-Director- announced free tickets for veterans are available for the Hula Bowl on Saturday 10 JAN 2026 at 12:00pm at Spec Martin Memorial Stadium, Deland.

MAJ Pam Ring -Scholarship Chair - stated she sent follow-up letters to the ROTC Instructors and Counselors at the 5 West Volusia High Schools.

LTC Mike Galaty -Legislative Chair- stated he will research and share the MOAA 2026 Advocacy Priorities.

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

CW4 Thomas Jackson-Community Relations - Excused

CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann- Chaplain-encouraged the members not to overdue New Years Resolutions and encouraged us to pick one item that is simple and doable to work on.

COL Jack Burtnett - Editor -advised the members the FEB VOC may be late because he will be in the middle of the ocean and not sure the quality of internet.

LTC Michael Magee- Speaker Coordinator-stated he is in the process of confirming speakers for FEB, MAR, and APR. One will be a round table discussion conducted by several religious leaders to include our own CH LtCol Chris Hoffmann about how our beliefs fit into our military way of life.

Ms. Lisa Hightower - Surviving Spouse Liaison - excused

LtCol Twila Davis-Personal Affairs Officer-stated she sent a get-well card to CAPT Chip Beedle.

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 December to recruit members and receive donations for veterans causes. The car show is in front of the courthouse. This will be a recurring monthly event. Members are invited to join us.

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Membership -

Reasons to be a Chapter Member - We Fight for All Veterans!

MOAA engages with Congress on issues impacting the serving military, veterans, and their family members. Joining with the other 360,000 plus MOAA members, we are a powerful voice that ensures we are heard on Capitol Hill. Did you know MOAA has been voted the #1 Military Advocacy organization for 19 years straight!

As military officers, it is our duty to not only take care of the troops—veterans, serving military, 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 on the death of a spouse.

Recruiting TIP:

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.

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

Volunteers needed -

Habitat For Humanity has started work on four houses for veterans in DeLand. They are looking for volunteers to help build these houses - hammer nails, cut boards, plant shrubs, etc. If you are willing to give your time, please let me know, Jack Burtnett at dtboat@gmail.com.

Nominating Committee. We need members to serve on this committee to get candidates for WVMC positions for the coming year. This is a short term commitment. Contact Curt Voelbel at LgtCurt@gmail.com.

Spring Fling. We need volunteers to help plan our Spring Fling, this is our casual get together or picnic in either April or May. Please contact Raul Gonzalez at majgonz@earthlink.net.

From the Chief of Staff -

Know Your Veterans Benefits

Did you know you can contact the Florida Department of Veterans Service for no-cost benefits counseling? Call 727-319-7440 to connect with a State Veterans' Service Officer or via email at FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV. You can find contact information for all State and County Veteran Service Officers at <https://www.floridavets.org/locations/>. Their team of Hope Navigators can also connect Veterans and their families with resources to improve their economic quality of life. Call 833-GET-HOPE or email HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov to contact one of the Hope Navigators. Learn more about Veterans' issues by following FDVA on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, or LinkedIn. A free Mobile App is also available by visiting <https://app.floridavets.org>.

Know your benefits, you earned them!

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.

Maj Curt Voelbel, USAF, RET
Chief of Staff

Book Review -

LTC Michael Magee (Ret.) will be hosting a review of George Orwell's book 1984. The review and discussion will be immediately following the February luncheon. Everybody is welcome.

Bricks of Honor -

The DeBary Foundation's Bricks of Honor, Stories of Valor Program: The DeBary Foundation is leading, in partnership with the City of DeBary, the program honoring members of the United States Armed Forces—both active duty and veterans—as well as Gold Star families. Bricks will be installed as part of a new plaza surrounding the six flagpoles in DeBary Memorial Park. If you are interested click [HERE](#) to go to the DeBary Foundation's website.

The Chaplain's Corner -



What did we learn from Martin Luther King, Jr.

We recently celebrated the birthday of Dr. King. Most of us know that he was instrumental in changing the structure of racism in America. Yet, if you were to ask, "What did he do to change society?" what would you say? As I have thought about this question and I realized that Dr. King lived during a time when many people were seeing on television peaceful protests being broken up by law enforcement with dogs and fire hoses. It forced people who lived in the north to ask, "How is this happening in America?"

In addition, Dr. King had studied non-violent resistance in other countries and discovered that it worked to change hearts and minds. So, coming from a Christian background he made sure that any protests or marches that he organized would be non-violent. He wanted to replicate the way that Jesus changed hearts and minds. It was by love and mercy.

Other civil rights leaders thought his strategy was slow and would mean more innocent people would suffer and die at the hands of the racist mobs.

King knew that violence only begets more violence. So, he vowed that he would not stoop to the tactics of his enemies even when they threatened his family or called them names and treated them with disdain.

Martin was struck down by a sniper's bullet. That could have led to a complete breakdown in society, but that didn't happen. Instead, enough hearts and minds were changed that both white and black citizens realized change must come to our country and we wouldn't be better as a nation if violence was chosen.

I believe that the gift that Martin gave to the world is that violence begets more violence. Love and mercy begets change. Has our society changed because Martin was here? Yes, it has.

He showed us that every human being matters and is worthy of dignity and respect. Have we changed completely, sadly the answer to that is no, but we are always a work in progress. The prophets of Israel often didn't see change even though they knew it was possible. I believe that is what Martin said and believed and died for. May his legacy make us better as a nation and closer to what God has called us to be.

*LtCol Chris Hoffmann, USAF, RET
Chaplain*

NEVER STOP SERVING®



The next meeting, 4 FEB, will be held at the DeBary Country Club, 300 Plantation Club Drive, DeBary, FL 32713. The meal will be classic chicken marsala with wild mushroom 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. This month our speakers will be Fr Chris Hoffman and Dr. Sean Ricks; they will lead a roundtable discussion on Holy Month, What it Means to Volusia County Americans and What it Means to WMVC. See page 7 for more info on Dr. Ricks.

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

Upcoming Meeting: 4 FEB 2026
Following Meeting: 4 MAR 2026
Upcoming Board Meeting: 11 FEB 2026

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.

Info about Sean Ricks -

We don't have many details on/for Sean Ricks, PhD., Pastor & Hospice Chaplain for Brevard County. LCDR (Ret), USN. Last assignment AFPAK Hands Intel Officer Kabul Security Forces and GIRoA (AFG) National Defense TAAD.

A quick snippet--from a post-grad thesis of an AFPAK Hand--states:
"The Afghanistan-Pakistan (AFPAK) Hands program infused culture into strategy. Its cultural focus produced individuals specially trained in the language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The program was designed to produce paradigm-shifting support to President Obama's updated strategy in Afghanistan. Nearly 14 years later, the war continues and the Hands are still dispersed throughout the country as advisors at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. As operations slow in Afghanistan, U.S. officials are shifting their strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific region and with that shift comes another Hands program--the Asia-Pacific (APAC) Hand

Again, the AFPAK Hand program is the handy work of GEN (Ret) David Petreus, modeled after his PhD dissertation on the China Hands program from the post WWII era. "The historical context covered in "The China Hands" is crucial for understanding the evolution of U.S.- China relations. He expertly navigates the period from the 1930s through the 1950s, encompassing the alliance between the U.S. and China during World War II, the subsequent Chinese Civil War, and the early years of the Cold War. This era saw dramatic shifts in U.S. policy towards China, from support for the Nationalist government to the severing of official ties following the Communist victory in 1949 and the subsequent marginalization of diplomats during the McCarthy era."

Sean has his Doctor of Ministry from Regent University. His LinkedIn page provides: Adjunct Professor at Eastern Florida State College. Wuesthoff Brevard Hospice · Part-time Chaplain & Counselor. Chief of Business Development with BeMe Natural.

Last Meeting - continued from page 4

MAJ Pam Ring stated the memorial service for LTC Harvey Brandt will be held at MIMS National Cemetery on 26 JAN 2026. All members are invited to attend.

CAPT Rountree shared information about the Debary Memorial Brick Program- "Bricks of Honor, Stories of Valor" to recognize Active-duty Military, Veterans and Gold Star Families. Bricks are available for purchase at: <https://polarengraving.com/debaryfoundation>

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LTC Wickett announced:
Executive Board Meeting will be held on 14 JAN 2026, 1000 hours at the American Legion Post 6. Members are welcome to attend.
Our next luncheon meeting will be 4 FEB 2026 1100 hours at the DeBary Country Club.

Meeting adjourned at 1335 hours.

LtCol Twila Davis, USAF, RET
Secretary

NOTICE -

Due to a revision of plans the position of Treasurer needs no longer to be filled. The current Treasurer will be able to remain in that position through the end of our fiscal year (June 2026) and possibly beyond.

It would still be wise to have an alternative to be able to step in if necessary. If you are interested in learning the Treasurer's position - but NOT do it per se - then let Laura Wickett know. Equally, other positions within the board, elected and appointed, always need new faces to step forward and give a hand. It's fun work.

Vietnam Memorial legacy Project -



Mr. Robert Atkins has secured approval for a monument to be added to the Veteran Memorial Plaza on Orange Avenue in Daytona Beach. 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.

Photos from Last Meeting -

Our guest speaker in January was LTC Michael Houser (Ret) who is the lead jumpmaster for the Round Canopy Parachuting Team. LTC Houser talked about the team's jump at Normandy, France, commemorating the combat jump 80 years ago. He showed pictures and short videos taken during various jumps here in the U.S.



LTC Houser (Ret) after his very informative talk. He is wearing the uniform of a staff sergeant in the 101st Airborne Division from 1944.



LTC Houser presenting his story to the WVMC membership.



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.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.

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.



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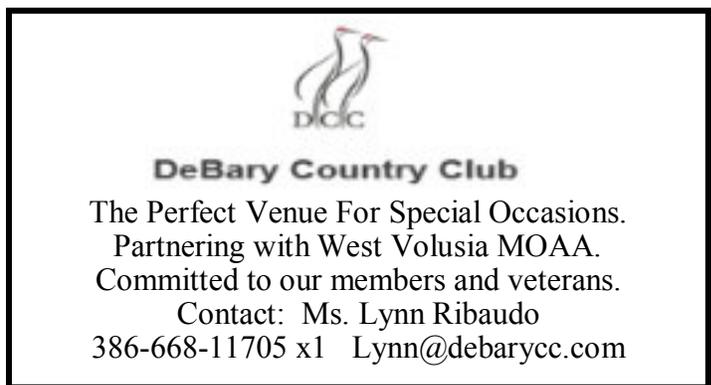
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