



GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON CHAPTER MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (GAJMOAA)

7 August 2025

The General Andrew Jackson Chapter Meets the First Thursday each month at McKendree Tower, 4343 Lebanon Pike, Hermitage, TN at 11:30 a.m....We will be meeting in the activities room which is on the 1st floor.

The officers and board meet at 10:45 am.

MISSION STATEMENT

To protect the rights & improve the lives of active duty, former & retired military service members, to include the Guard & Reserves, and their families through sharing of information & advocacy at the state & national level.

However, his strong showing in the state senate race caught the eye of Republican leaders in Nashville, who recruited him to run for TN's 4th Congressional District in 1994, when Cong. Jim Cooper left the seat to run for U.S. Senate against Fred Thompson.

Even though the 4th congressional district had been held by the Democrats since the post-Civil War Reconstruction period, Hilleary won on election night, as did many other Republicans across the country running for Congress, and the House of Representatives became majority Republican for the first time in 40 years.

2025 Officers & Board Members for the GEN Andrew Jackson Chapter of MOAA:

Our August Program is

The Current Political Landscape in the World

By Mr. Van Hilleary

President	Bobbie Bell, COL
1st VP	Dan Sullenger, MAJ
2nd VP	Mickey Ponder, CPT
Secretary	Jim Perkinson, Col
Treasurer	Al Snyder, LTC
Chaplain	VACANT
Board	Don Deering, COL
	Bill Moss, CPT
	Rich Neal, Ltc
	Phil Ponder LtJG
	Jeff Rice, Col
	Barry Sprouse, LTC

Past President John Wade, CW5

Legislative POC: John Wade

Membership Chair: Dan Sullenger

Surviving Spouse: John Wade

Van Hilleary grew up in the small town of Spring City, TN, located halfway between Knoxville and Chattanooga.

He is a graduate of The University of Tennessee with a B.S. in Banking and later received a law degree from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, AL.

After graduation from UT he entered the U.S. Air Force and became a navigator on C-130 aircraft. After active duty, he went to work for his family's textile business in Spring City, which he then left to attend law school. The day after his law school graduation in 1990, he volunteered for service in the Air Force Reserve during the first Gulf War - Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. While deployed to the Persian Gulf, he earned 2 Air Medals, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal.

In 1992 he ran for Tennessee State Senate against the matriarch of one of Tennessee's powerful Democrat families at the time, Senator Anna Belle Clement O'Brien of Crossville. Although it was announced that he won on election night, additional votes were found overnight in Overton County, and by morning he had come up just short.

He served on the Armed Services Committee, the Education and Labor Committee, and Budget Committee, where he helped balance the federal budget for four consecutive years - the only times the federal budget has been balanced in the last 62 years.

In 2002, after 8 years in the House of Representatives, Hilleary ran for Governor of Tennessee on an anti-income tax and pro-education platform. He lost to then-Nashville Mayor Phil Bredesen in the closest race for governor in Tennessee since the 1800s.

He later served a term as TN's National Committeeman on the Republican National Committee.

After working as a lawyer/lobbyist for a number of years, in 2018 he accepted a position with his longtime friend and newly elected 6th District congressman, John Rose, as his Chief of Staff, serving in Washington when Congress is in session and in Tennessee - out of the Gallatin office - when Congress is in recess.

He lives in Hendersonville with his wife of 25 years Meredith and the three youngest of their four children who are still living at home.

Let's make him feel welcome!

BIRTHDAYS FOR AUGUST

COL Tom Sarver 13
COL Don Deering 29



Upcoming meeting dates:

4 September
2 October
6 November

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Deut. 16:15 NIV

CHAPLAINS CORNER:

The Lord your God will BLESS you in all the work of your hands, and your JOY will be complete.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

This verse was suggested by our dear friends & members, COL Tom Sarver & his wife, Nona. I think this verse captures the spirit of our organization & chapter. We are a service organization, both military & in action, & as such, our legacy should be in not just what we think & say but what we do for others. Even though Tom & Nona cannot make our meetings anymore, they continue to serve & without being asked to do so.

Bobbie Bell, COL, USA

SICK CALL

I think our ailing & injured members have recovered, for which we are all very thankful.

Keep Tom & Nona Sarver in our thoughts & prayers as they struggle with health issues. I'm sure they would like to receive a card from you to let them know they have not been forgotten. The address is:

504 Sunset Way
Hermitage, TN 37076

If you know of a member or their spouse/significant other who is ill, please let me know.

PRESIDENT'S WORDS OF WISDOM:

We are in the dog days of summer. If you live at the Bell House, you might think that is a good thing & it is. I have discovered that I retired so I could be a fulltime stay-at-home dog mom to Peyton! He likes it & so do I although the pay is not quite as good as it was when I worked outside the home.

As a fulltime dog mom, I have a few very important duties & life is not good if I mess up those duties. I have to keep his water bowl full. Sounds pretty easy, right? However, I will check it multiple times & it will be fine, then he sneaks in & drinks the bowl dry. Really?! Feeding time is also very critical. He eats at 1600 every day. Often he will try to move that time up. Then he must have 3 mini marshmallows after – not 1 or 2 but 3. Now breakfast is a whole other situation. You see, he wants to eat when he gets up, just after going outside. My idea of when to get up & Peyton's idea tend to differ but since he's in charge, I get up when he wants – 0400, 0500.

Of course, there are multiple visits outside. He does have a doggie door off the screened in porch, but he has been known to wait on the steps for me to open the door, so he doesn't have to jump in. I have no idea why that is, but I don't always indulge that whim.

Peyton also likes to go riding. He is my co-pilot & loves to lay there until he goes to sleep. Mind you, he can't get in the passenger seat if there is ANYTHING in the seat. He doesn't look out but watches me until he falls asleep. That is, unless we pull into Sonic, then it's PUP CUP TIME!

You might wonder why I used this column to talk about the Peyton Man. It's simple: he's family. Just like we are family. All families don't look alike but they are hopefully bound by love & respect. Just like our MOAA chapter is!

Bobbie

TN MOAA Website

The Tennessee Council of Chapters has created a new website that has current Tennessee & MOAA info as well as having a page for each chapter. I encourage you to check it out: tncoc-moaa.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY US COAST GUARD!



On 4 August the USCG, founded in 1790, will turn 235 years old! Their motto SEMPER PARATUS "Always Ready"

July Meeting

If you were not one of the 20 members who showed up, you missed a good meeting. We were given a private tour of the Tennessee State Museum by Tara Spada, with an emphasis on the military background of our state. I honestly don't know which is harder, herding cats, toddlers, or retired military officers but she did a masterful job!



Afterwards, we all walked over to the Nashville Farmers Market & ate (always a highlight of any gathering!).

August Service Project

Bring in at least 2 nonperishable food items for donation to the First United Methodist Church's Food Pantry in Lebanon.

The following is a list of items they suggest:

Canned vegetables
Canned meats
Instant potatoes
Mac & Cheese
Cold & Instant Hot Cereal
Cans of fruit
Juice Boxes
Ready to Eat Soup
Dry or Canned Beans
Peanut Butter Crackers
Ramen Noodles
Canned or Dry Pasta & Sauce

Want to go Cruising?

The president of the NC Council of Chapters, Jay Grabus, has cordially invited TN MOAA members and their families to join his NC MOAA members on a cruise leaving in October of this year. Below is the information if anyone is interested:

Last Call for Six Day Bermuda Cruise October 12-18 There may be some cabins still available for the cruise, but the MOAA discount expired. If you are interested in joining those already booked, please contact the agent below to discuss and reserve. Lorna Tiller, AAA ITA 910-343-1978(O), 910-540-3390(M) 1823 Hawthorne Rd. Wilmington, NC 28403 ltillertravels@gmail.com

Possible Tricare For Life &/or Medicare Fraud

From [Patricia Bergquist](#): remind all members to check their TRICARE FOR LIFE Explanation of Benefits (EOB) "carefully" upon receipt.

I personally had 6 items of durable medical equipment on my recent EOB which I did not either need or receive. Never heard of the company. Fortunately, TRICARE did not pay the claim, but MEDICARE did. Upon calling TRICARE FOR LIFE, I was told there has been a rash of fraudulent claims submitted recently. TRICARE has flags in their system, but Medicare does not! Medicare must be notified.

If anyone encounters charges on their TRICARE EOB which they did not receive or know about, call TRICARE and they will

then connect you to Medicare to report the "fraud".

Veteran's Crisis Line

988 → press 1

This line serves veterans, service members, National Guard & Reserve members, & those who support them.

24/7 365 days of the year

ID CARDS:

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT

- [Smyrna Training Site](#)
615-267-6300
- [Berry Field](#)
615-660-86

Titans Salute to Service



The Sunday 10 November 2025 is the Tennessee Titans annual Salute to Service game. The Titans will play the Houston Texans @ 1200 @ Nissan Stadium. The Titans have an exclusive ticket offer. From each ticket bought through this promotion, \$10 will go directly to the Tennessee Council of Chapters/MOAA. The tickets are in the 300 sections of the stadium.

For more information, contact Ryan Ruff at 615-565-4254 or Ryan.Ruff@titans.nfl.com.

Member Spotlight

CPT J. Milton Ponder USA (Ret)



Mickey Commissioned 2nd Lt. Infantry in May 1969 from the Tennessee Tech ROTC program. A BS in History and Political Science was included for a small fee.



He was assigned as BCT Training Officer at Ft. Bliss, Texas from October 1969 to February 1970. His next assignment was as BCT Training Officer and Company Commander at Ft. Ord, CA from February 1970 to September 1970. Following this, he was as the Assistant S-1 at the 2nd Brigade and then the 2/501 BN of the 101st Airborne at Phu Bai, SVN from September 1970 to June 1971. From June 1971 to August 1978, Mickey was assigned to USAR and Tennessee National Guard in various positions including Executive Officer and Company Commander (Clarksville and Dickson).

Mickey has been married to Martha Bailey Ponder for 57 years as of August 3rd. Their children are Bentley (J), Brandon (Caitlin) and Brooke. And, of course, Tilden and Holden, the grandsons.

He has been a licensed insurance agent and broker since 1975. Hobbies include golf and reading, especially current history and politics. His latest quote: **History does not repeat, but it does instruct.**

CHOW LINE



Our meal will be from Chick-Fil-A. Please pay the Treasurer **\$15 in unmarked bills** when you arrive.

ALERT

When you receive your newsletter, please respond to the email & let John Wade know if you will be coming to the meeting or not & how many will be accompanying you. This is to try to get as good a head count as possible for ordering our meal. **The cutoff time is noon on Monday before our Thursday meeting.** If you don't respond, you may find yourself without any food! Even if you choose not to eat, please let John know this. You may also TEXT him at 615-804-2717. His email is jwade229@comcast.net

Editor's Notes



#1 Last month when Don Deering was our member spotlight, I had gotten 2 pictures from him. I neglected to put this one in the newsletter, but he is so amazingly young & cute, I wanted to make sure you all got to enjoy it as much as I did!

#2 I also wanted to post a picture of our August speaker, but I couldn't make it work on the cover page so here he is.



Mr. Van Hillary

LEGSLATIVE ACTION

The following is verbatim from the MOAA website:

Retirees & Veterans

MOAA NEVER STOPS SERVING WELL BEYOND THEIR MILITARY CAREER.

Veterans and transitioning servicemembers face unique challenges once they have left the military: second and non-military careers, reinventing themselves, retirement concerns, navigating veteran benefits and health care, and access to support programs and networks. MOAA will focus on capitalizing on our recently released report, [*Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans*](#), to advocate for veterans exposed to toxic materials during their service. While the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act has made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by the VA, additional measures are required.

MAJOR RICHARD STAR ACT

Contact your legislators and urge them to support the Major Richard Star Act, which would authorize combat-injured veterans to receive their earned DoD retirement pay for years of service and their VA disability compensation for lifelong injury.

Currently, these combat-injured (and often seriously disabled) veterans are subject to a cost-saving offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of VA disability received. To reduce earned retirement pay because of a combat disability is an injustice; the compensation for

these injured veterans is not the place to achieve savings.

TOXIC EXPOSED VETERANS

Veterans exposed to toxic substances like Agent Orange, chemicals released by burn pits, and radiation should not have to fight for decades to prove their illnesses are service-connected. Yet according to a recent report from MOAA and DAV, toxic-exposed veterans wait over 34 years on average before receiving presumptive service connection and the care they've earned. The PACT Act was a historic step forward, but its work isn't complete.

Congress must pass legislation to bolster the legal framework for establishing presumptive conditions, creating clear timelines and processes to move from exposure acknowledgment to the delivery of earned benefits. This common sense reform will cut through red tape, improve VA accountability, and end the long wait faced by millions of veterans.

To keep connected, ensure you are signed up for [The MOAA Newsletter](#) and [register as an advocate](#) at our Legislative Action Center. Don't know how? Goggle MOAA & follow the prompts.



National MOAA & the General Andrew Jackson Chapter are nonpartisan entities.