



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

4 September 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.

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

President	Bobbie Bell, COL
1st VP	Dan Sullenger, MAJ
2nd VP	Mickey Ponder, CPT
Secretary	Jim Perkinson, Col
Treasurer	Al Snyder, LTC
Chaplain	John Pickler, LTG
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

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.

Our September Program is

My Experience at the Pentagon on 9/11

By LTG (R) John Pickler

John is one of our own & has graciously offered to share his experiences while working at the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. Here is a little bit about John:

A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, John was graduated from the United States Military Academy and commissioned in the Field Artillery on 9 June 1965. After a series of company level assignments in the United States and Germany, coupled with combat duty with the 1st Cavalry Division in the Republic of Vietnam, he attended the University of Virginia and was awarded a Master of Science in physics in 1971, after which he served as an instructor and assistant professor in the Department of Physics at West Point for three years. Field grade duties included a series of command and operational staff positions in the United States, Turkey, and Germany, followed by an assignment to the Pentagon as the Executive Officer to the Chief of Staff of the Army. In 1990 John was promoted to brigadier general and stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, as the Assistant Division Commander for Support of the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized). After command of Joint Task Force Six at Fort Bliss, Texas, in 1991-93, he was promoted to major general and assigned

to senior staff and command at Fort McPherson, Georgia, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. John commanded Fort Carson from 1996 to 1997, and in October 1997 he was promoted to lieutenant general and assigned as the Chief of Staff and Deputy Commanding General of United States Army Forces Command. From August 1999 until his retirement in January 2002, John was Director of the Army Staff in the Pentagon. His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, two Defense Superior Service Medals, five Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Star Medals (one with "V" Device), four Meritorious Service Medals, 19 Air Medals, and two Army Commendation Medals. Following his retirement from the Army, John joined Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) in February 2002 and served as the Manager of Strategic Programs and Homeland Security until deploying to Iraq with BNI in April 2003. During his tour with the Iraq Infrastructure Reconstruction Program, John was initially the Manager of Liaison and Security Services and then the Deputy Program Manager for the project until his return to the United States in September 2004. After a six-month stint as a capture manager for a major DoD project, in April 2005 John became the President and Program Manager of Kwajalein Ranges Services, LLC, which provides space operations, logistical, and community services support to the U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll/Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site. John returned from Kwajalein in July 2007 and became the Senior Manager of Defense & Space Programs. In June 2011 John was assigned as the Program Manager of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program until his retirement from BNI in June 2012. John and his wife, Karen, have been married for over 59 years and have one daughter, two sons, eight grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Their youngest child is an Army colonel who has had five combat tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan and is currently assigned as the commander of the 1st Infantry Division Artillery at Fort Riley, Kansas.

BIRTHDAYS FOR SEPTEMBER

CPT Mickey Ponder	8
LCDR Gordon Jones	10



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Romans 12:12

CHAPLAINS CORNER:

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Like many, I spend too much time in thinking about my struggles & shortcomings & misfortunes instead of being grateful for all the good in my life & all of the hope it brings. Let's embrace the bad & make it good!

Bobbie Bell, COL, USA

NEW CHAPLAIN

LTG (R) John Pickler has graciously agreed to be our new chaplain. He has big shoes to fill, taking over from Tom Sarver, but I appreciate his willingness to take on this duty, especially in light of the many obligations he already has & the traveling he & Karen try to do.

Upcoming meeting dates:

2 October

6 November

4 December

SICK CALL

Our dear friend & board member, Mickey Ponder, has had some significant health issues that have landed him in the hospital several times within a week's time. He is home & assures me he is on the road to recovery. Hopefully he can make our September meeting.

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

PRESIDENT'S WORDS OF WISDOM:

When you read this, I will be in either London or Scotland!

As always, I'm sad to miss a meeting. I so enjoy getting to visit with everyone & play catch up on each other's adventures. I am especially sorry that I will not get to hear LTG Pickler's talk on his experiences while at the Pentagon on 11 September 2001.

There are times in our lives when a major event happened & what we were doing sticks with us for the rest of our lives. I was in Mrs. Beesley's 5th grade class at McClain School in Lebanon on 22 November 1963 when President Kennedy was shot & killed. On 20 July 1969, I was at my grandfather's home in Nolensville with my family & we watched the first moon landing & walk.

11 September 2001, I was in my office at the Tennessee Army National Guard Armory on Sidco Drive, working at my desk. A co-worker came in & told me to turn the

TV on. He said, "You won't believe what some idiot has just done! He's flown into one of the twin towers in New York!" Quickly I turned on the TV. The three of us in the office watched, stunned into silence, at we saw first one building burning, then the second plane flying into the towers. My first thought was how could a trained pilot not see those two buildings sticking up in the air. As the story unfolded, I still couldn't get my hands around what had happened. Several of us had a planned trip to D.C. in a couple of weeks & we had a tour of Air Force Two laid on. I wondered out loud if this would affect that trip!

I remember a couple of days later, we had a voluntary assembly in the drill hall. One of our Soldiers who was also a minister spoke. We prayed for those lost & our country, & we played Lee Greenwood's song "God Bless the USA". When it came to the part where he sang "I proudly stand up", everyone in that assembly stood up without any prompting or hesitation. To this day, I still get tears in my eyes, a lump in my throat, & chills just thinking about it.

We didn't know on that day the impact that event would have on our country, our world, & each of us. I pray we, as a nation, never have to go through any of that ever again.

God Bless the USA!

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 AIR FORCE!



The birthday of the USAF is 18 September 1947. It's motto "Aim High – Fly-Fight-Win". W. Stuart Symington was the 1st Secretary of the AF.

August Meeting

We had Mr. Van Hillary as our speaker & he spoke on the nature of politics today. Mr. Hillary had the distinction of being sworn in to the TN Air National guard. Briefly. But as an acting member of Congress at the time, his fellow Congressional members were concerned about his membership since he would not be able to be deployed. So his commission was quickly revoked!

August Service Project

We had a great response to our service project for August. I lost count of how many non-perishable food items were brought in, but I can tell you, everyone brought more than just two items. This food was donated to the First United Methodist Church's Food Pantry in Lebanon.

I am just so proud of our chapter for the generosity of its members!

Member Spotlight

CPT Olen Charles Akins, USN (Ret)



My name is Olen Charles Akins. I was raised in the Amarillo, Texas area, graduating from a small town, Happy High School in 1954. I joined the navy shortly afterward. I was promoted very rapidly and after four years, I got out as an E-6. I attended Texas Tech for two years before my wife was in the family way. My navy vocation was critical, and they offered me a return at the E-6 rating. I accepted and remained in the navy for an additional 36 years. I served as a Chief Petty Officer, Warrant and Chief Warrant before being demoted to Ensign. My career path was aviation maintenance management. I served at the squadron, wing and carrier levels. I also did an exchange tour of two years with the Australian Navy and two tours in Japan. The last one being mostly deployed to different carriers off the coast of Vietnam, with some time in DaNang. My most enjoyable experience was the carrier air wing maintenance billet. Coordination of maintenance of approximately 85 aircraft with the required movement for flyable versus heavy maintenance is an around the clock evolution. My career ending assignment was the Command billet for all aircraft maintenance civilian contracts maintaining pilot and "back

seaters" training aircraft for Chief Of Naval Air Training. I was concurrently the Assistant Chief of Staff for Maintenance and Material. Somewhere during my career I finished my degree with the University of New York by extension. It's fair to tell that I'm an over achiever. My goal was to retire at 20 years and close to the top of the enlisted ranks, however I certainly agree that O-6 is much better. I am reasonably confident that my career was no different from yours in that it passed so quickly. Sure there were hard times, but would you do it again, absolutely. If that wasn't true, none of us would be MOAA members, continuing the camaraderie. Very respectfully submitted, Charlie

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

CHAPTER DUES

We have quite a few members who are in arrears on their chapter dues. Come January 2026, we start all over again with payment for 2026.

Dues have been \$25 for the year & are payable to our treasurer in January - cold hard cash or a check are acceptable.

Members that are not caught up by the end of December will be subject to being dropped from our roles.

We want your money but more importantly, we want your attendance! I know it is easy to forget about the dues as we don't tend to hound you on this issue, If you have any questions or problems with this, feel free to contact me & we'll discuss your situation.

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.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The following is verbatim from an email from MOAA Government Relations

It's August, and that means lawmakers are back home for their annual summer recess, the perfect time for MOAA's grassroots advocates to raise their voices and make a difference.

We need your help to send a clear, unified message: Support for servicemembers, veterans, and their families must remain a national priority.

This year, MOAA's Summer Advocacy in Action (AiA) campaign focuses on three bipartisan priorities that directly affect readiness, retention, and the well-being of our nation's all-volunteer force. Your advocacy can help push these efforts across the finish line.

Pass the Major Richard Star

Act

Improve TRICARE Access

for Families

Support Military Spouse

Employment

How You Can Help

During the August recess, lawmakers are listening closely to their constituents, and we need your help to deliver this message to every district and every state.

- Learn more about the issues. Download the issue papers and get the latest news on the topics on our [Summer AiA landing page](#). Share the link with your network of advocates as well.
- Sign up for the [Legislative Action Center](#) to send messages directly to your lawmakers. Signing up will also enable you to receive priority alerts on breaking issues on Capitol Hill that affect uniform servicemembers.
- Call your elected officials directly using MOAA's Capitol Hill Toll-Free Hotline at (866) 272-MOAA (6622).
- Get in touch with your [local MOAA chapter](#) to engage and drive forward grassroots advocacy at the local level.

These three issues are all directly tied to the health, strength, and readiness of the all-volunteer force.

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.

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



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