



# SAR Alabama



Volume 40, Number 2

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Compatriots, friends, and partners in patriotism,

As we move deeper into 2026 and closer to America's Semiquincentennial, I am inspired by the energy, dedication and unity of our Alabama Society. The months since our annual convention were filled with meaningful work—some visible, much behind the scenes—all of it essential to strengthening our Society and preparing us for the historic year ahead. I want to share with you the story of where we stand today, what we have accomplished together and the direction in which we are heading.

Our spring 2026 Board of Managers meeting at American Village on May 16 was a powerful reminder of the strength of our Society. From the opening invocation to the final recessional, the meeting reflected the professionalism, patriotism and purpose that define ALSSAR.

Reports from officers and chapters painted a picture of a vibrant organization: 48 new members approved so far this year, dozens more applications pending and chapters across the state actively engaged in Americanism programs, JROTC and Eagle Scout recognition, cemetery preservation and educational outreach. Our financial footing remains strong with financial

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## Shoals Area holds grave-marking ceremony

The Shoals Area chapter hosted a grave-marking ceremony on May 24 for patriot Shadrach Gibbs at the Barton Cemetery in Cherokee.

The ALSSAR Color Guard and ALSSAR president Ron Dains attended the event and Dains, along with chapter president Alex D'Aunoy, delivered remarks at the ceremony.

Among the media at the event was WZDX Fox54 from Huntsville, which interviewed D'Aunoy and Dains for a segment on the news, which was later uploaded to the station's



—Photo courtesy of Ron Dains

*Back to front, compatriots David Jones, Scott Owens and Randal Jennings fire a volley at the grave marking.*

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## Color Guard showcases SAR for Biscuits' 250 event



—Photo by Tim Gayle

*The ALSSAR Color Guard of (from left) David Jones, Jason Dallas, Gary Backus, Cade McCool and Travis Parker presents the colors at the Biscuits-Shuckers game.*

They traveled from across the state to perform at the America 250 event at DABOS Park, coming together in Revolutionary War-era uniforms to honor America.

The ALSSAR Color Guard marched to home plate to honor America during the singing of the national anthem on Saturday night prior to the first pitch of a game between the Montgomery Biscuits and the Biloxi Shuckers.

"Baseball is our national pastime," said SAR Color Guard commander David Jones, who traveled down from Tuscaloosa for a five-minute appearance at home plate. "This is a great honor,

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## Message

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resources that allow us to support youth programs, outreach, and the operational needs of a growing Society.

Yet the meeting also highlighted areas where we must continue to improve. Communication remains a challenge, particularly with mass emails diverted to spam or junk folders on occasion.

The NSSAR Blue Database, while improving, still requires careful attention from chapter and state officers to ensure accuracy. As we prepare for the next dues renewal cycle, our current process is cumbersome, prone to error, and increasingly expensive due to rising postal rates. To address this, we have established a committee—led by past president Benny Hannah with support from vice president Bill Carter, secretary Bill Sauser and treasurer Scott Martin—to develop a more efficient, member-friendly system. Their work will be presented at fall BOM.

We laid groundwork for BOM discussions during our April 16 EXCOM and chapter presidents' Zoom meeting. That meeting, though informal, was one of the most productive gatherings we have had this year. We clarified the process for selecting delegates to the 136th Congress, reviewed the July \$76 application fee procedures and reached consensus on expanding Blue Database access to both chapter presidents and secretaries.

We also confronted the need for a standardized compatriot death notification process—one that ensures accuracy, honors our departed compatriots and provides timely communication to families and chapters. Some improvements are already implemented and policy letters are in draft as appropriate.

One of the most significant developments this spring was the work of our chancellor, Jay Maples, Esq. in drafting a comprehensive youth protection policy for ALSSAR. While the National Society provides guidance, it is largely advisory and does not fully address the legal and practical realities we face in Alabama. Our youth programs—Orations, Essay, JROTC, Eagle Scout, Poster, Brochure, and more—place us in regular contact with minors. We owe it to them, to their families and to our own members to uphold the highest standards of safety and accountability.

The proposed policy addresses background-check requirements, clarifies digital-communication rules, establishes transportation and overnight-event protocols and aligns our procedures with Alabama law. This is not merely a compliance exercise; it reflects our values and our commitment to safeguarding the young people

we are privileged to serve.

Even as we focus on the present, we are also contributing to the legacy of the future. This year, ALSSAR prepared a historic America 250 time-capsule record—a document that includes the names of our 2026 officers, chapter presidents, committee chairs, and the 1,036 active-member compatriots.

It also includes a message addressed to Americans in the year 2276, along with symbolic items such as the Southern District America 250 flag streamer, ALSSAR lapel pin and commemorative challenge coins. This project is a testament to who we are today and what we hope future generations will remember about our commitment to patriotism, education and historical preservation.

As we look ahead to the remainder of 2026, our work continues with purpose. We will refine our dues renewal process, codify and implement our youth protection policy, strengthen state- and chapter-level communication and continue preparing for the 2027 annual convention on Feb. 19-20.

Currently, 15 ALSSAR compatriots will attend the 136th Congress in Greenville, NC from July 10-16. Of the 15 attendees, 13 are delegates who will vote on important NSSAR by-laws proposals or amendments. We will gather again on Oct. 10 for fall BOM, where we will address several important topics, including the proposed Data Admin Officer position, America 250 successes and remaining initiatives and continued improvements to our reporting and administrative processes.

On behalf of all ALSSAR Compatriots, I offer a heartfelt "THANK YOU!" to the members of our great Color Guard. Color Guard Commander, Joe Barker, and members have responded to every request for SAR participation which has immeasurably heightened public awareness of our organization. We are fortunate to witness a level of dedication, perseverance, flexibility, selflessness and esprit de corps that honors the United States and our compatriot ancestors in a most professional manner; well done gentlemen.

Compatriots, the story of ALSSAR in 2026 is one of progress, unity, and forward momentum. We are honoring our past, strengthening our present, and preparing our Society for a future worthy of our Patriot ancestors. Thank you for your dedication, your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to the cause of liberty. Together, we will continue to advance the mission entrusted to us.

—Ron Dains



—Photo courtesy of Chuck Cartwright

### **'Washington' gives address to students**

**Gen. John Archer Elmore compatriot Rick Wells, in the guise of George Washington, delivered an engaging presentation at the Prattville Library on April 31. The program was presented to STEAM students from various Prattville-area schools on a day honoring the anniversary of the first inaugural address of George Washington. In addition to discussing Washington's distinguished career as both a soldier and statesman, Wells led a spirited and interactive conversation with the students, highlighting key moments in Washington's leadership and legacy. Attendees were also treated to a viewing of local artist Bob Adams's highly realistic, life-sized papier-mâché depiction of George Washington and his horse, Nelson.**

**Biscuits**

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to come down and do a ballgame, celebrating the 250. It means a lot. It's real special."

The ALSSAR Color Guard is under the command of Joe Barker, but the Color Guard was split on this particular day, with half of the volunteers standing at home plate while the other half was performing in Wetumpka.

The five compatriots at DABOS Park included Jones and fellow Black Warrior River chapter compatriot Cade McCool, who carried a musket in the ceremony; drummer Travis Parker, who represented the Wiregrass chapter along with fellow compatriot Jason Dallas; and Gary Backus, a compatriot in the Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter.

"This was a good event for us," Jones said, "but we've been busy these past few days. We had to turn one down, an event in Eutaw, today."

Spectators rose to their feet as the Color Guard advanced across the infield, their uniform, tricorn hats, flags, musket, and drum inspiring respect and admiration. The national anthem was especially powerful with the Color Guard standing at the center of the field behind home plate, forming a living tribute to the patriots whose legacy we preserve. Several fans approached our compatriots afterward, expressing appreciation for the SAR's presence and the dignity our Color Guard brought to the evening.

Another dozen or so representatives of Montgomery's Gen. Richard Montgomery chapter, the Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter and the Wiregrass chapter sat in the stands and celebrated America 250 by watching the game between the Biscuits and the Shuckers.

Among those spectators were Alabama Society president Ron Dains, who organized the night out at the ballpark, and past National Society president Bruce Pickette.

"Events like this strengthen our visibility across Alabama and remind the public that patriotism is not confined to holidays, it's lived and demonstrated year round," Dains said. "The Montgomery Biscuits organization has already invited ALSSAR back for future games, a testament to the professionalism and spirit our Color Guard consistently brings to every event.

"A heartfelt thank-you to all Color Guard members who represented our society with honor and enthusiasm. Your service continues to inspire."

The Biscuits, wearing America 250-themed hats and jerseys, celebrated the Fourth of July a week early because the team will be in Birmingham for the holiday.



—Photo by Tim Gayle

**The ALSSAR Color Guard takes the field for the national anthem.**



—Photo courtesy of Ron Dains

**Gen. John Archer Elmore compatriots enjoying a night out include, from left, sergeant-at-arms Rhett Ferguson, vice president Morgan Mackey, ALSSAR president Ron Dains and GJAE president Kevin Lawrence.**



—Photos courtesy of Ron Dains

**The postgame America 250 celebration included a fireworks show.**

# *In Memory...*

## **James Larry Hayes Guy Charles Kerby**

The Tennessee Valley chapter lost a pair of compatriots in a month's time with the May death of James Larry Hayes and the June death of Guy Charles Kerby.

**LARRY HAYES**, a member of the Tennessee Valley chapter, passed away peacefully on May 25 after spending several days surrounded by loved ones. He was 84.

Larry was born in Birmingham on March 7, 1942.

During a particularly busy week in June of 1963, at the age of 21, Larry graduated from Birmingham-Southern University with a bachelor's degree in physics, moved to Huntsville and married the love of his life, Carolyn Elaine Layman. He continued his education with graduate studies in physics from 1963-1966 at the University of Alabama at Huntsville before beginning his remarkable professional career.

Over the next six decades, Larry and Carolyn built a loving home centered on faith, family and steadfast commitment. Together, they welcomed three children, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren to the world.

Larry spent much of his career as an engineer with the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC), where he served as program director for numerous advanced technical radar and optical programs. He later continued his work with the development of ballistic missile defense systems, managing multi-million dollar government programs and reporting directly to senior Army leaders, before founding his own consulting company after retiring. Larry was deeply respected for his intelligence, precision and dedication to his work.

In 1990, Larry earned the Superior Civilian Service Award for his outstanding leadership, skill and dedication to the U.S. Army Strategic Defense Command. Additionally, from 1982-84, he served as the Northern Division Lt. Governor of Toastmasters International.

Though a quiet observer by nature, Larry loved deeply and faithfully. His strong character, steady presence, and fierce love of his family set an aspirational example for those who knew him. He was rarely seen without a hat, whether it was a fedora for church and special occasions, a Panama-straw hat or his trademark Alabama baseball cap. And he could almost always be found behind a video camera, carefully recording family gatherings and precious moments.

Larry, a lifelong learner, was an avid reader with an endless curiosity about the world. As a self-taught speed-reader, he consumed books and articles on countless subjects, especially history and biblical studies. Led by Carolyn's faithful example, Larry was baptized into the Church of Christ and was a devoted and involved member for over four decades, known for leading detailed and thoughtful Bible studies.

Larry's life was marked by quiet faithfulness, intellectual curiosity, humility and enduring love for his family.

Services were held on May 29. Larry is survived by his beloved wife, Carolyn, his children Ruthie Sommers (David), Marland Hayes (Denise), and Janell Hustead (Bill), his grandchildren Tyler Sommers (Mary), Ginny Hayes Heath (Tyler), Adam Sommers (Lee-Ann), Jessica Sommers Concha (Andrew), Marissa Hayes, Brett Hustead (Lindsay), Abbie Hustead, Cindy Hayes and Annie Hustead and great-grandchildren Colton Concha and James Sommers.

**GUY KERBY**, of Goodlettsville, Tenn., passed away on June 19. He was 60.

Born on Oct. 14, 1965, in Lexington, Ky., Kerby lived a life defined by faith, service, love and devotion to his family, God and country. A proud Christian, he dedicated his life to the Lord and was a faithful member of Long Hollow Church.

He honorably served his country in the United States Army for 22 years. He completed two tours in Iraq and two in Afghanistan. Following his active-duty military retirement, he continued his service through government contract work and employment with the Department of Defense. His commitment to duty, integrity and service was evident throughout his life and career.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Guy was a man of many passions and interests. He was a master diver, enjoyed researching his ancestry and heritage as he was a member of both the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Sons of the American Revolution and loved spending time outdoors walking with his beloved yellow lab, Cotton.

On weekends, he could often be found cheering on his grandson at baseball games or rooting for his favorite teams, the Georgia Bulldogs and the Atlanta Braves. He found joy in life's simple moments and was always eager to learn something new.

Kerby will be remembered as a wonderful son, brother, husband, father and grandfather. He was the life of the party, bringing laughter, energy, and warmth wherever he went. Known for his quick wit, unwavering faith, and fierce devotion to his family, he had a way of making every gathering more memorable. He was deeply loyal to those he loved and never missed an opportunity to support and encourage his family. While his life was cut far too short, he lived it fully and purposefully, leaving behind a legacy of love, service, and devotion that will endure for generations.

He is survived by his loving wife, Allison, his children Kyle Kerby, Kaitlyn Kerby, Kelly Kerby, Kenzie Kerby and Kaleb Kerby, grandson Braxton Wills and sisters, Terry Dotherow, Karen Thompson, and Jan Lazenby.

Visitation was held on June 27 at Beck Funeral Home in Clayton, Ga. Services followed at the Beck Funeral Home Chapel in Clayton, Ga., on June 27, followed by a graveside service.



—Photo by Jennifer Dallas

**Wiregrass compatriots at the ceremony included, from left: Travis Parker, Malon Murphy, ALSSAR Color Guard Joe Barker, Paul Olson, ALSSAR Color Guard Skip Dotherow, Rex Yance, Perry Vickers, John Cheney, James Crabtree, Jason Dallas, Brad Countryman, ALSSAR Color Guard Randal Jennings, ALSSAR president Ron Dains, Phillip Kitchens, Paul Mullins, Jack Anderson and Glenn Brackin.**

## Wiregrass chapter holds ceremony for Capt. William Brackin

Capt. William Brackin of Anson County, N.C., was surrounded by scores of his descendants on April 18 in a long-awaited grave marking ceremony at the Kirkland-Brackin cemetery near Newville.

Nearly half of the Wiregrass chapter was present and more than 80 patriotic Americans were in attendance.

Brackin served in the Anson County militia, the Montgomery County militia and the North Carolina Light Dragoons Regiment, which for time operated as part of the Continental Army.

He was present and took part in the battle of Beatti's Bridge fought near present-day Fort Bragg, N.C., and later at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina. Brackin continued his service through the close of the Revolutionary War.

The keynote speaker was one of Dr. Glenn Brackin of Geneva, one of Capt. Brackin's sixth great grandsons and a compatriot in the Wiregrass chapter.

Wiregrass chapter president Phillip Kitchens officiated the event, which included official remarks from ALSSAR president Ronald Danes and an invocation and benediction delivered by Wiregrass compatriot Dr. Jack Anderson.

Another special thank you is owed to the ALSSAR Color Guard, who not only traveled many miles to support this event but also began to train our very own color guard.

The chapter is eternally grateful to Mrs. Debbie Kirkland and all of the Kirkland and Brackin families for their unwavering support of this event. The wonderful ladies of the Emassee-Robert Grierson chapter ALDAR were kind enough to host a delightful reception following the ceremony at Concord Baptist Church. Nearly the entire Wiregrass region was proudly represented at this ceremony. Wreaths were presented by the Joel Early chapter (Georgia Society SAR), the Emassee-Robert Grierson chapter, the John Coffee chapter and the soon-to-be-commissioned Constitutional Oak chapter, all of the Alabama DAR Society.

In addition, the chapter was supported with help from Claire Murphy and Jenn Dallas, who always go above and beyond in their efforts to support our chapter.



—Photo by Jennifer Dallas

**Descendant Glenn Brackin offers remarks.**



—Photo by Jennifer Dallas

**Wiregrass president Phillip Kitchens, Glenn Brackin and Wiregrass chaplain Dr. Jack Anderson.**



—Photo courtesy of Ron Dains

**Color Guard honors World War I veteran**  
 SAR Color Guard members, from left, Joe Barker, Skip Dotherow and Randal Jennings didn't miss the opportunity to honor a World War I veteran at the Kirklands Cemetery following a Wiregrass chapter grave marking in the same cemetery.



—Photo courtesy of David Jones

**Black Warrior River past president honored**  
 Black Warrior River chapter president Stephen Asbury, left, presents chapter past president Cade McCool with the bronze Meritorious Service Medal at the chapter's April meeting. McCool served as president from 2024-26 and was a very active president who was responsible for 100 percent member renewal of the chapter in 2025.



—Photo courtesy of William Rozier

**Cheaha new compatriots**  
 The Cheaha chapter inducted two new members at the monthly meeting on March 11 in the Anniston/Calhoun County Public Library. Chapter president Ron Burson, far left, and vice president Randy Boyer, far right, are pictured with Glenda Tucker and her husband Harry Clifton Tucker, center, along with his brother Jerry Flynn Tucker. Their patriot ancestor is Thomas Jones Sr., of South Carolina.

# Black Warrior River learns about Fort Tombecbe

The Black Warrior River Chapter received a presentation on the French Fort “Tombecbe” at their June meeting.

Fort Tombecbe is located near the town of Eppes on the Tombigbee River. Built by the French around 1736 as a defense mechanism after becoming allies with the Choctaw Indians, the fort was occupied by approximately 40 French marines.



**DUMAS**

Dr. Ashley Dumas, professor of Anthropology and Archeology at the University of West Alabama, gave the presentation as she is heavily involved with the excavation of the old fort. The Daughter’s of Colonial Dames placed a historical marker at the fort in 1980. Numerous artifacts have been found on the site which confirms the authenticity of maps of the area.

While no battles were fought at the fort during the American Revolution, the British did occupy the fort for a short period of time (1763-1768) prior to the revolution but abandoned it as the war started against the colonies.

The Spanish were the last occupants of the fort in 1794 but also abandoned the fort in 1797 when easily persuaded by the United States to leave.

Excavation of the site continues with each day revealing something new and puzzling. This area of Alabama has chalk under the topsoil. Dr. Dumas’ team has found a layer of red clay in certain areas of the fort. How did it get there?

The presentation revealed much more about the history of Alabama.

—David Jones



*Foundations and fence post holes found lay out the shape of the fort, above, while occupied land in 1732 by British, French and Spanish forces leave open disputed land northwest of Florida.*



—Photo courtesy of Seth Keller

## ***Auburn professor discusses Indians with Richard Henry Lee chapter***

*The Richard Henry Lee chapter was treated to a presentation by Dr. Jim White, professor emeritus at Auburn University’s School of Aviation on “How the American Indians moved from the Stone Age to the Iron Age.” He brought actual examples of colonial-aged weapons used by both the Indians and the patriots during the Revolutionary War.*





—Photo courtesy of Ron Dains

*Shoals Area chapter president Alex D’Aunoy, left, and ALSSAR president Ron Dains speak at the ceremony.*

**Shoals**

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YouTube channel. B.C. Clemons of the North Alabama Local History YouTube channel was also present and recorded the entire ceremony.

Alamance chapter DAR and Chief Colbert chapter DAR each presented a wreath at the ceremony as well.

It was the second grave-marking ceremony for the Shoals Area chapter in May.

On May 21, chapter president D’Aunoy, along with chapter treasurer Brian Newton and a potential member attended a grave marking hosted by the Alamance chapter DAR for patriot Mrs. Elizabeth Duckett Casey.

—Alex D’Aunoy



—Photos courtesy of Alex D’Aunoy

*Shoals Area chapter president Alex D’Aunoy delivers remarks, left, at the grave-marking ceremony for patriot Shadrach Gibbs at Barton Cemetery in Cherokee before Mindy Bates of the Chief Colbert chapter DAR, above, presents the chapter’s wreath at the ceremony.*

—Photo courtesy of Lawrence Hillis

**Placing the wreath**

*The Tennessee Valley chapter color guard presented a wreath at the Memorial Day celebration at Huntsville’s Veterans Park. City officials and Redstone Arsenal staff spoke as approximately 40 groups presented wreaths on behalf of our fallen veterans. Bob Anderson and Lawrence Hillis presented the chapter wreath as Randal Jennings, Steve Brouse, Chip Pharr, Scott Owen, and Don Wolfe presented the colors.*



—Photo courtesy of Lawrence Hillis

**Liberty Tree dedication in Morgan County**

*From left, Morgan County commissioner Ray Long, Tennessee Valley chapter emeritus James Henderson and chapter president Lawrence Hillis dedicate an American elm at the courthouse as a replica of the famous “Liberty Tree” that was at the Boston Common area where the Sons of Liberty gathered to discuss how the colonies could separate themselves from Greg Britain.*



—Photo courtesy of Lawrence Hillis

**ROTC/JROTC awards presented**

*The Tennessee Valley chapter participated in ROTC/JROTC award ceremonies at 18 high schools and universities in Madison, Morgan and Limestone counties, including one at Buckhorn High that featured, from left, past president Ken Carpenter, cadet Thomas Zeigler and president Lawrence Hillis.*

**ALABAMA SOCIETY, SONS OF  
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

**NEWSLETTER OF THE ALSSAR**

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If you're submitting material for the next newsletter, please e-mail your pictures and information to [timgaylesar@gmail.com](mailto:timgaylesar@gmail.com) or send information about your chapter's activities or upcoming events by Sept. 10 to Tim Gayle at 3104 Cabot Street, Montgomery, AL 36110.



—Photos courtesy of Chuck Cartwright

***Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter participates in Memorial Day ceremony***

***The Gen. John Archer Elmore chapter was proudly represented at the Memorial Day wreath-laying ceremony held at the Autauga County Courthouse. Chapter members in attendance included, from left, Richard Meeks, vice president Morgan Mackey, president Kevin Lawrence, Gary Backus, Rick Wells, ALSSAR president Ron Dains and Chuck Cartwright. As part of the ceremony, Backus, left in right photo, and Dains presented a wreath on behalf of the chapter.***