



South Alabama Veterans Council

An organization for all people, to serve all veterans.

A coalition of Veterans, Friends and Organizations working together to further the cause of Veterans in the South Alabama area



Lou Lartigue
251-471-4322
Council President

Pat Downing
251-751-6619
Council VP

Fran Barber
251-605-1290
Secretary / NewsLetter
Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain
251-391-8176

Tom Schwarz
251-649-8459
Treasurer / Chambless Fund

Pete Riehm
251-442-4349
LNO/MC

SAVC e-mail: support@savc.info

Capt Hal Pierce, Bill Atkeison, Spiritus Emeritus SAVC

NEXT SAVC MEETING - Tuesday- April 18, 2023 – 8:30 a.m. - Saucy Q

1111 Government St–Mobile AL

On the web – <http://www.savc.info> - Facebook – South Alabama Veterans Council



Presidents Corner:

"March came in like a lamb but is going out like a lion. That was evidenced at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day ceremony held at BMP on 29 March 2023. It was windy and cold. Bill Bergman, our guest speaker, was great. I hope everyone saw it on the local TV channels. Our SAVC Team did a great job honoring our Vietnam Veterans. We have a lot going on as we enter Spring. We are fighting for our Veterans and letting our Legislatures know what we need in Alabama. We are working hard to plan for our Armed Forces Day & Blue Star Salute on 20 May 2023. We are also working on planning an execution of an honorable Memorial Day on 29 May 2023 at BMP and Virginia Street National Cemetery. We continue to give our small grants to the local Veteran Support Groups. I encourage each and every one to pray for our Nation and especially our Veterans who made this Country great."

Lou Lartigue, President US Army LTC (Ret)
South Alabama Veterans Council



Chaplains Corner:

It's be grateful!

Read 1Corinthians 1:4

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for all the things you have done, and we are grateful for all the victories you have won. Heavenly Father there is no doubt that you have been very good to us down through the years, and we are truly grateful. Now we say thank you for all the love, all the grace, all the mercy, all the salvation, all the forgiveness, all the blessings, all the kindness, all the healing, all the deliverance, that you have done for us. Our hearts are full of gratitude.

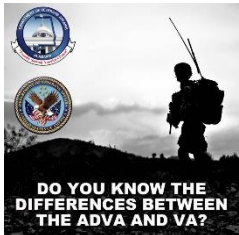
In Jesus Name Amen!

Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain SAVC



Retired Rear Admiral W. Kent Davis was recently re-appointed by the State Board of Veterans Affairs (SBVA) for a second term as Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA). His second four-year term begins Feb. 16.

[ADVA Commissioner Approved for Second Term – Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs](#)



Did you know the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs is NOT part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs?

The ADVA is a State of Alabama department that assists former members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their dependents in numerous capacities. We provide services that complement those of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This includes the preparing of claims for and securing compensation, hospitalization, education, vocational training, and other benefits or privileges that veterans may be qualified for under Federal or State Law, or regulation, by reason of their military service. Among our many facilities, we operate state veterans homes, a state veterans cemetery, and numerous Veterans Service Offices (VSO) around the state.

The separate U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is comprised of a Central Office (VACO) and field facilities throughout the nation administered by its three major line organizations: the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

Learn more about the ADVA here:

<https://va.alabama.gov>

[Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs | Montgomery AL | Facebook](#)

ALABAMA G.I. DEPENDENTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

[Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Booklet](#)

This academic scholarship program is administered by the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs and applies to the dependents of Alabama's disabled veterans. This pamphlet was prepared to give a brief summary of these benefits. If full and comprehensive treatment of the law is desired, it may be found in Chapter 6 of Title 31 of the Code of Alabama (1975). Representatives of this department, known as Veterans Service Officers, are located in county offices throughout the state. Their offices are normally located in the county courthouse or in the immediate vicinity. They will be happy to assist applicants with these educational benefits. Their services are entirely free. For additional information about the services of our department or to locate our county office nearest you, please visit our website at www.va.alabama.gov

[Table of Contents \(alabama.gov\)](#)

DISTINCTIVE LICENSE PLATES

To obtain a Veterans Distinctive License Plate, a veteran must present proof of service. This may be a copy of their DD Form 214, driver's license with veteran designation, or any other form with evidence of military service or veteran status.

VETERAN DRIVERS LICENSE

[Alabama Department of Public Safety](#)

Since May 1, 2013, Alabama veterans have had the option of displaying proof of military service on their driver's licenses.

To establish proof of service, a veteran must visit one of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Driver License examining offices, a license commissioner's office or probate office, and present a DD-214 form from the U.S. Department of Defense that shows an "honorable" or "general under honorable conditions" status.

FIND YOUR VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

[FIND YOUR VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE – Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

VETERAN TREATMENT COURT

Veteran Treatment Courts (VTCs) were developed to avoid unnecessary incarceration of veterans with mental health and/or substance abuse problems. In the program, veterans may receive medical and mental health treatment, training and help with finding a job, as well as housing and transportation assistance. Veterans who successfully complete the program will have the charges against them dismissed and may be eligible to have their records expunged

[VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS – Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

[Veterans Courts.pdf \(alacourt.gov\)](#)



Do you know everything you need to about the PACT Act?

The new 2022 PACT Act:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care

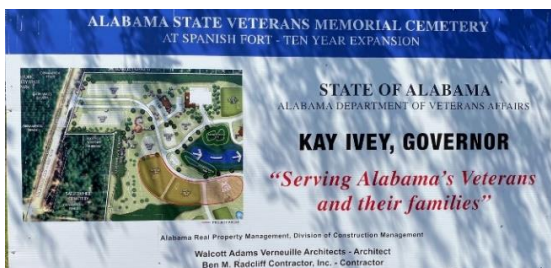
Talk to your local Veterans Service Officer today! --

> <https://va.alabama.gov/serviceofficer/>

ADVA serves Alabama's Veterans from the moment they take off their uniform for the final time through eternity. Learn more about eligibility and pre-registration for the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Spanish Fort:

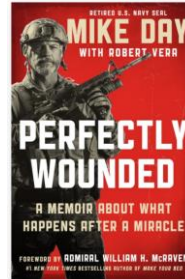
<https://va.alabama.gov/veterans-memorial-cemetery/>

[ALABAMA STATE VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERY AT SPANISH FORT – Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs](#)



VETERANS RETREAT Will be held August 11-13 at the YMCA in Wetumpka, AL –

American Legion partnership with the VA out of the Birmingham/Tuscaloosa area. This is for high-risk veterans who come together to build friendships, and support groups with other veterans creating a common bond, and someone to call on when a crisis arises. Of those veterans who have participated in the few years we have had the Retreat, a single veteran who participated has not been lost. It is referred to in the American Legion as the Alabama Model and is being used Nationwide.



Douglas “Mike” Day, a highly decorated U.S. Navy SEAL who survived being shot 27 times while deployed to Iraq, passed away earlier this week on March 27. Day served 21 years in the Navy and later worked as an author and an advocate for wounded military veterans.

The incredible true story of former Navy SEAL Mike Day, who survived being shot twenty-seven times while deployed in Iraq.

Perfectly Wounded is the remarkable story of an American hero whose incredible survival defies explanation, and whose blessed life of service continues in the face of unimaginable odds.

On the night of April 6, 2007, in Iraq’s Anbar Province, Senior Chief Mike Day, his team of Navy SEALs, and a group of Iraqi scouts were on the hunt for a high-level al Qaeda cell. Day was the first to enter a 12×12 room where four terrorist leaders were waiting in ambush. When the gunfight was over, he took out all four terrorists in the room, but not before being shot twenty-seven times and hit with grenade shrapnel. Miraculously, Day cleared the rest of the house and rescued six women and children before walking out on his own to an awaiting helicopter, which flew him to safety.

While in the hospital, the Navy SEAL lost fifty-five pounds in two weeks. It took almost two years for Day to physically recover from his injuries, although he still deals with pain. Like so many veterans, doctors diagnosed Day with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury – the invisible wounds of war.



CPR & AED WORKSHOP

Sunpaws hosted a CPR & AED (Automated External Defibrillator) workshop, with certification of attendees, for the celebration of Sunpaws Pet Services' TWENTY YEAR ANNIVERSARY on MARCH 18th, 10 am-2 pm in Mobile (Tillman's corner)

puppies@sunpaws.com



Irvin Turberville/Lou Lartigue

AFD/BSS First donation this year,
Sunpaws Pet Services,
Thank you Frances Dauster!!



AFD/BSS Committee members present at the March 21 meeting from left to right Maj Siler, Neil Bruyn, Fran Barber, Jay Reeves, Lou Lartigue, Beverly Moritz, John Joe Dec, Jennifer Byrd, Frances Dauster, Don Payne, and Christine Elser

Armed Forces Day - Blue Star Salute 5K Run/Walk 1Mile Fun Run May 20

Memorial 5K Run/Walk & 1 Mile Fun Run For Alabama's Fallen Heroes

5K race will start at 7:30 AM 1 Mile will start at 7:35 AM

Location:
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park on the Causeway.

Benefits:

Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. (www.bluestarsalute.org) Each runner will run with the name of one of Alabama's Fallen Heroes on their Race Bib, and afterward, during activities, they can visit the wall of Alabama's Faces of the Price of Freedom to see the faces of their fallen service member.

Enjoy a day full of entertainment, fun, and food at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park where there will be a variety of activities for everyone. Aeronautical entertainment provided by Silver Wings and others. Music provided by Alabama's 151st Army National Guard Band. Join us in honoring Alabama's Military Service members, Veterans, and our Fallen Heroes. Many Veteran Service Organizations will be available for serving our military and Veterans. The day will begin with a Fallen Heroes Salute honoring Alabama's fallen military service members who have died since 9/11/2001

EVENTBRITE QR CODE 5K RUN:



EVENTBRITE Link:

<https://bluestarsalutefallenheroes5k2023.eventbrite.com>

Facebook Event Link - 5K Run/Walk 1Mile Fun Run:

[ALABAMAS FALLEN HEROES 5K RUN/WALK | Facebook](#)

Facebook AFD/BSS Event Link:

[ARMED FORCES DAY/BLUE STAR SALUTE | Facebook](#)

Armed Forces Day Web Site:

[Armed Forces Day Mobile AL](#)

Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. [Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc.](#)



Last month SAVC presented a grant to QOV, and we received a thank you letter from them.

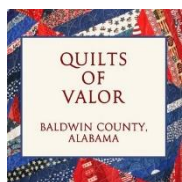
March Grant Presentation was to Capt Eli “Out of the Deep”, which takes Veterans and their families on fishing cruises on Mobile Bay. Campbell’s Caregivers, Sandy Campbell, and her family take care of elderly veterans. They go every year to the Senior Games, this year they will be going to DeMoines, Iowa. One of the veterans they care for is 104 years old, Taylor Howard.



QOV – Quilt Show Abba Shriners
10:00am – 5pm, Friday, May 12 - 13,
The show quilt is valued at over \$2500.00

Our Mission: to cover Service Members and Veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.

[Quilts of Valor Stars over Mobile | Facebook](#)



MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2023 AT 10 AM – 3 PM

Event by [Quilts of Valor - Baldwin County, Alabama](#)

Sharon's House in Belforest: contact one of the Board for directions.

Duration: 5 hr

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

QOV Board meeting & Official SEW DAY. Bring your lunch, drink and project. Spend the day creating quilt tops or assist with cutting, ironing and sewing to help others.

[Sew Day | Facebook](#)

Reach Ministries - Cornerstone Church Fruitdale, Al



IRON MEN DOVE HUNT
Reach Ministries presents
"More than a dove hunt"
Guest Speaker: Nick Williams
September, 10th
1705 Highway 56
Chilton, AL 36818
Registration 11:00-1:00
Hunt begins after drawings
This is a free dove hunt. There will be raffle tickets sold and many prizes will be given away including a 2007 Harley Davidson Fatboy. 100% of proceeds will go to support Veterans.
To buy raffle tickets or get more information contact Cory Tate 251-589-8479



SAVC Thanks you Reach Ministries!! - It all started with the 6th Annual Iron Men Dove Hunt on September 10, 2022, in Chatom AL. There were tickets sold for a chance to win a 2007 Harley Fatboy and other items. 100% of donations and ticket sales were used to Support Veterans. SAVC was one of the recipients of the donations and Wednesday night SAVC had the honor of presenting a plaque showing appreciation to Reach Ministries, and the Patriots of Washington County, for their hard work and dedication to Veterans. The donation has already been put to good use.

Last night, Good food, and great fellowship!! The SAVC sends a huge thank you to all who donated to the cause - Honoring and Helping Veterans
Cory Tate @ 251-589-8479

Save the Date: Thinking ahead here –
Veterans Day 2023

The Mobile Veterans Day Parade is scheduled for Friday, November 10, Veterans Day falls on Saturday this year so the parade will be moved to Friday, Nov 10

Veterans Day is a U.S. Federal Holiday, that is always celebrated on November 11th. If the Holiday falls on a Saturday, it is observed on the previous Friday. **If the Holiday falls on a Sunday, it is observed on the following Monday.**



MOBILE, Ala. (WPMI) — To remember the Vietnam War, is to deal with conflicting emotions that a generation of Americans might rather just avoid. "It's a sad, unfortunate time," says Col. Pat Downing, the 2010 Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year, "but also a time that is a rejoiceful time that we remember we got our prisoners out of the camps of north Vietnam and they were reunited with their families back home."

His comments come as veterans and supporters gather at Mobile's Battleship Park for the 50th National Vietnam War Veterans Day Ceremony. In the 1960's America was divided about our involvement in what was bill a fight against the spread of communism., and that division dug deep wounds into the country.

Guest Speaker, Bill Bergman Purple Heart Commander, gave tribute to our Vietnam Veterans.

(Follow the link to hear his speech)

[Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day 3/29/2023 - photographybyfran](#)



[On this 50th National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day, it's time to talk | WPMI \(mynbc15.com\)](#)

[Event held Wednesday in Mobile to honor Vietnam veterans \(fox10tv.com\)](#)

[National Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony | WPMI \(mynbc15.com\)](#)

LENT IN ACTION (PRAYER)

PRAY EVERYDAY A THANKSGIVING,
FIND YOUR PURPOSE FOR LIVING.
LISTEN AND ANSWER HIS CALL,
FOR HE HAS A PLAN FOR ALL.

FOCUS ON HIS DEATH ON CROSS,
REPENT TO AVOID ULTIMATE LOSS.
NOW ALWAYS FOLLOW HIS PLAN,
IT LEADS TO THE PROMISED LAND.

JOMAC

Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Angel Fire, NM

The story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire, New Mexico began 52 years ago on May 22, 1968 Angel Fire is home to the nation's first monument to honor veterans of the Vietnam War. On U.S. 64, just north of Angel Fire, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial features a chapel, visitor center and museum, a veterans' walk and a "Huey" helicopter on display.

Special events to memorialize veterans and active duty servicemembers include Labor Day Bricklaying and the Run For The Wall Memorial Day Motorcycle Ride. Up to 2,000 people attended the bricklaying this year. Each brick bears the name of a living or deceased veteran service member, their military branch and the years they served (a brick with no end date means they are still active duty). Bricks are available for purchase by anyone wanting to honor a military service member or veteran. About 5,000 bricks line the memorial.

The Memorial was originally known as the Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel and had its origins in a battle near Con Thien, South Vietnam in which 17 men lost their lives. Among the men, was David Westphall, son of Victor and Jeanne Westphall. The parents of Lt. David Westphall received notice of their son's death in Vietnam. Lt. Westphall, USMC, was leading a patrol in Con Thien when his platoon was ambushed and thirteen men were killed in action. Thanks to their vision and determination the memorial exists today to honor not only these 17 Marines but all members of America's armed forces.

David Westphall had enlisted in the Marine Corps and left for college after his initial four-year enlistment was over. He received a degree in Spanish from the University of Montana and rejoined the Marines, receiving a commission as an officer. He was assigned as platoon leader of Company B, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, and was deployed to Vietnam. David had survived the bite of a deadly viper only to succumb to bullet wounds on that fateful day in May.

[The Story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire - Questa News](#)





MOBILE, Ala. (WKRK) — They don't always get the recognition they deserve in supporting veterans along the Gulf Coast. And they aren't asking for it. That's why WKRK News 5's Bill Riales and Photojournalist Jason Garcia had to ambush one group who regularly makes decisions that support veterans.

We did it initially to surprise and recognize two commissioners, Spanish Fort Dentist and Navy and Vietnam War veteran Dr. Barry Booth, and Retired Army Colonel and Vietnam veteran Pat Downing. Over the past many years, both have made significant strides in advocating for veterans here along the Gulf Coast.



[Recognizing USS Alabama Battleship Commissioners – WKRK News 5](#)

Poppy season has begun at Post 199

There are poppy donation cans in the canteen and down by the Tiki. Make a donation, take a poppy, and wear it proudly showing your support for our Veterans!

On September 27, 1920, the poppy became the official flower of The American Legion family to memorialize the soldiers who fought and died during the war. In 1924, the distribution of poppies became a national program of The American Legion.

Led by the American Legion Auxiliary, each year members of The American Legion Family distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.



[American Legion Auxiliary #199](#)

ANCHOR ACADEMY'S

SPRING BREAK CAMPS



USS ORUM



EXPLORE
USS ALABAMA



AIRCRAFT PAVILION

AGES:

**1ST - 6TH
GRADE**

For Info :

251-433-2703

<https://www.ussalabama.com/>

DATES:

**MARCH 27-31
APRIL 17-21**



Julius Powell is a true Patriot, supporting SAVC 100%

FACEBOOK - This From Mobile Memorial Gardens:

- Meet Julius Powell. He has worked at Mobile Memorial Gardens Cemetery for 33 years. Following in his mother's footsteps, former Mobile Memorial Gardens Cemetery President. As General Manager/Vice President, Julius is our go to guy for everything! With an abundance of knowledge in computers and business he always keeps things running in the office. With a MBA from South Alabama, Julius graduated with a Masters in Business in Administration. When asked why he loves his job he says it has been a fulfilling career that has allowed time for family and church activities. Julius has been married for 34 years to Shelley and has two children John and Laura who live near Memphis. When not at work he is spending time with his family and playing bass guitar or on his 40 acres shooting and fishing. He loves being involved in church activities and serving on the security team at Woodridge Baptist Church. He has a passion for organizing civic activities for Veterans and our Mobile Community 1st Responders. Stop by Mobile Memorial Gardens Cemetery for our next event honoring our Veterans and our Mobile Community Heros and say HI to Julius!

**MOBILE MEMORIAL
GARDENS CEMETERY**
MEMORIALIZING MEMORIES®



6100 Three Notch Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36619
(251) 661-1333

Commemoration Of The Battles Of Fort Charlotte & Spanish Fort-1780 Mardi Gras Park, Mobile, AL

Richards DARHM and Friends Foundation of Richards House plus Sons of the American Revolution and Children of the American Revolution presented an awesome event on March 11 at Mardi Gras park downtown Mobile. Commemorating the Battles of Fort Charlotte/ Spanish Fort 1780 Revolutionary war.



Military Holidays and Observances in April to Add to Your Calendar

- Gold Star Spouses (April 5th) ...
- National Former POW Recognition Day (April 9th) ...
- Air Force Reserve Birthday (April 14th) ...
- Army Reserve Birthday (April 23rd) ...
- National Military Brats Day (April 30th)

LENT IN ACTION (FASTING)

GOD WILL BLESS US WHEN WE FIND,
 SELF-DENY PLEASURE OF ANY KIND.
 DOING SO DRAWS US CLOSER TO HIM,
 WITH ENDLESS GRACES TO AVOID SIN.

FASTING ALSO STRENGTHENS OUR RESOLVE,
 TO LIVE A HOLY LIFE FOR OUR SALVATION.
 DO WITHOUT DESIRED THINGS HELP SOLVE,
 EXTREME POVERTY IN MANY POOR NATIONS.

JOMAC

Infinite Opportunities

INFINITE LIVING PROGRAM

SHARED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Located in Mobile Alabama

We provide a wide variety of Special Housing Options. Some of these include but not Limited To:

- Veterans
- Domestic Survivors
- Seniors
- Ex Offenders
- Homeless
- Sober Living
- Many More...

Why Choose Us!

Infinite Opportunities Independent Homes offer a safe, secure environment with no occupancy time limit. We pride ourselves on the superior service we provide to our clients regarding safety, healthy living environments, health & wellness resources, and all-inclusive accommodations.

RENT INCLUDE:
 All Furnishing, All Utilities, Internet, Washer/Dryer, and Food - Starting at \$595 per month

We Accept:
 Private Pay, Payee Services, VA/SSI/SEDI, & Funding Programs

CONTACT US

251-662-9812 or
 251-298-7237
 info@infiniteopp.org

www.infiniteopp.org

Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for free emergency health care

Veterans Recovery Resources can help,
 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.
 (251) 405-3677

VETERANS RECOVERY RESOURCES

www.vetsrecover.org #vetsrecover



Veterans Recovery Resources

Your needs are urgent - So is our response.

You can call us 24/7 at 251-405-3677 to get the support that you need.

Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a trained Veteran Peer Support Specialist who can offer options specifically for you.



ALABAMA VETERANS RESOURCE

In partnership with the SAVC and Scuttlebutt Radio Network, we are creating a Veteran Owned Business List. Please register if you are a VOB or an organization helping veterans/military and share with other Veteran business owners. This effort aims to provide support to and increase awareness of Veteran Owned Businesses.

**South Alabama Veterans Council
March 21, Meeting Minutes**

Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. by **President Lou Lartigue** – 46 in attendance - Location Saucy Q BBQ
Opening Prayer – **Chaplain Michael Austin, Pledge** – **Jim Jeffries**, Lou Lartigue – Welcomed the new people. **Minutes for February**, USCG-ATC provided a tour, and lunch on us in the galley. Newsletters: 7 snail mail newsletters and 435 emails. **Treasurer's report** – **Tom Swartz** – January hat collected \$236.00. Last month SAVC presented a grant to QOV, and SAVC received a thank you letter from them.

Grant Presentation to Capt Eli "Out of the Deep", who takes Veterans and their families on fishing cruises on Mobile Bay. Campbell's Caregivers, Sandy Campbell, and her family take care of elderly veterans. They go every year to the Senior Games, this year they will be going to DeMoines, Iowa. One of the veterans they care for is 104 years old, Taylor Howard.

VSO Report - Jim Jeffries, Past President American Legion, state of Alabama – Current Veterans Affairs. A relatively new chapter of AMVETS, Elberta, AL they have a little over 60 members, they are very active in the Elberta and Lillian area. American Legion – Veterans Retreat is a partnership with the VA out of the Birmingham Tuscaloosa area. American Legion Department Convention Montgomery June 22-25. Marine Corp League of Alabama convention in Montgomery June 22-23. 12th

Annual State of Alabama POW/MIA ceremony, Montgomery, South lawn of the Capital Sept 16, 2023.

Alabama Department Veterans Affairs – Commissioner - Admiral Kent Davis, Sissy-Louise Moore, and Linda Jenkins. - Cemetery's recent groundbreaking for expansion of the cemetery, working on the columbarium's first, (above-ground internments for cremated remains.) Veterans cemeteries already have the vault in the ground, they will be installing over 2700 vaults. Plans are to deliver the crypts in the July timeframe and the whole project is projected to be completed by the end of the year.

In 2022 Congress passed a new law called the Burial Equity Act which allows state cemeteries to start burying those traditional National Guardsmen and Reservists. ALDVA is on track to start burying those veterans in May, 2023.

A few months ago there was a theft at the cemetery, most of the plaques were recovered, the wall is being prepared to place the plaques including the National Guard and Space Force. ADVA is exploring the possibilities of using robotic lawnmowers at the cemetery. The new 5th state Veterans home is on schedule in Enterprise AL. Looking to open that facility In the summer of 2024. State of Alabama funds a Dependent scholarship program which augments the Federal government GI bill which is a scholarship for veterans. The Alabama scholarship funds scholarships for dependents of selected disabled veterans. The application process is being put online for quicker, more efficient ease of application. Federal VA – Federal PACT Act passed in August 2022, the biggest expansion of veterans benefits since the creation of the GI Bill toward the end of WWII has added a lot of protection for veterans who were exposed to toxic agents.

Outreach and Engagement department of ALDVA: Sissy-Louise Moore ALDVA in 2022 had 6 town halls in ten months, this year they are on the books to go to Enterprise,

Auburn, and Anniston. No Veterans Suicide goes unnoticed. Also spreading the word about Veteran's Suicide prevention, another challenge is **Operation we Remember**, a flag display. ALDVA is partnering with universities across Alabama to bring attention, and awareness to the number of Veteran suicides in Alabama. Schools buy the flags, ALDVA provides the signs and information the school needs to get it out to their students. Partnering with the USoAL, and JROTC , In Mobile – Davidson High School Navy JROTC to do flags
Pete Riehm – **Navy News**...USS Gunston Hall LSD 44 crew had a great time in Mobile for Mardi Gras. The second fleet on the Atlantic Coast Mobile is rated the number one port call for the US Navy. Memorial Day – if you participated in the memorial ceremony on Virginia St., you are now scheduled to do what you did last year. MOAA has hired a lobbyist to be in Montgomery to help with all these issues and they are willing to work to help with all the issues affecting veterans If any organizations have any input the MOAA is trying to work for all veterans,
Pat Downing Veterans Cemetery total internments 3520 as of March 20, 2023, ADVA state board approved Admiral Davis for a second 4-year term. BMP Teak deck is 54% complete, projected completion date May 2024
AFD/BSS – Meeting Tuesday, 2 months out. Lou discussed the events of AFD.

VMRT – Fran Barber reported Uniti Fiber "Proud to Serve" along with Montford Point Marines, VMRT and some Family members had a clean-up day March 10. Interview by Robert Battles, WGOK, and had some response from the interview.

92nd Infantry Division – Eddie Irby, thanked SAVC for their support in the death of his brother.

Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day March 29 –at BMP 0700... Bill Bergman guest speaker.

Mobile Chamber of Commerce – Barbara Peters reported the chamber got support from the Veterans Affairs Committee on applying for a grant to support veterans programming for small business owners The chamber wants to help wherever possible.

Exchange Club of Mobile – Lisa DeShazo, Program Chair for Mobile Chapter explained what the Exchange Club does in the Mobile and Baldwin County Area. President, Bill Seliba.

USCG-ATC thanked everyone for coming out last month and invited the group to Cap Hulser's retirement ceremony on April 14

QOV – Quilt Show 10:00am – 5pm, Friday, May 12 - 13, Abba Shriners Building, The show quilt is valued at over \$2500.00

DAV STATE Conference in Alexander City April 1st

Col Patrick Downing presented a tutorial on the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

Fran Barber
Secretary, SAVC
March 21, 2023