



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



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Capt Hal Pierce, Bill Atkison, Sy Lichtenfeld, Spiritus Emeritus SAVC

NEXT SAVC MEETING – Tuesday, June 18, 2024 – 8:30 a.m. Saucy Q BBQ

1111 Government St–Mobile AL

On the web – <http://www.savc.info> - Facebook – [South Alabama Veterans Council](#)

Presidents Corner:



"We had a busy May with the Armed Forces Day Event at the Battleship Memorial Park and the "Flag Lowering Ceremony" on Memorial Day. We had a great SAVC Meeting at Vets Recover. The breakfast was great and the speaker was very informative (see included article). We will be going back in the near future. June is a reset month from a Veteran activities standpoint. We will have our June SAVC meeting on 18 June at Saucy Q's.

We are well into summer, and the heat and humidity are on us. Remember to do your buddy checks of our fellow Veterans to make sure they are cool and healthy. If there is a Veteran in need, let us know. We hope you have a safe and productive summer."

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

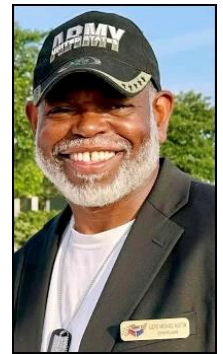
Chaplains Corner:

Greetings everyone!

(It's let it shine) Read Matthew 5:16
"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

In order to have a light, we must walk in the light. JESUS is the light, and in him is no darkness at all. Sometimes, people need visual aids. That's why God said let men see your good works. But it is not for our glory, but to glorify God. The light that people should see shining in us is JESUS. They should also see our obedience, faith, trust, love, commitment, holiness, and our salvation. They should see us lining up with the word, the way, and the will of God. Some of the people we know and come in contact with don't know Jesus, but they know us, so what are they seeing? We should make the effort to let Jesus shine in us and through us at all times.

*In the Name of Jesus, Amen!
Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain SAVC*



80th anniversary of the D-Day landings along the Normandy coast during World War II.

On June 6, 1944, Allied forces launched Operation Overlord—the codename for the massive Allied invasion of Normandy, France—with more than 150,000 troops.

June 6, 1944, was not a day like any other—it was one of the most important, consequential, and remarkable 24 hours in America’s existence and, arguably, the known history of the entire world. But why? It wasn’t when World War II started or ended—two milestones that are usually marked in major conflicts—and it wasn’t even the occasion of the war’s largest skirmish (that was the Battle of the Bulge, which commenced on Dec. 16, 1944, and ended on Jan. 28, 1945.) What D-Day recognizes is the moment the United States entered the war in Europe, which was key to helping the Allies beat back Nazi Germany. Rarely has combat been remembered so nobly. As U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt explained to Americans in announcing why Allied soldiers were invading: “They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate.” This message not only resonated in its time, it remains some 80 years later a rally to remember that—at least sometimes—bloodshed is just and worthy.

Ending with approximately 20,000 casualties on both sides, those who took part witnessed one of the most pivotal battles against Axis forces and the beginning of a prolonged, costly, and ultimately successful campaign to liberate northwest Europe.

Historic Aircraft That Led The D-Day Aerial Invasion Of Normandy Returns To Europe For 80th Anniversary Commemoration

THAT'S ALL, BROTHER That's All, Brother is a Douglas C-47 Skytrain aircraft (the military version of the civilian DC-3) that led the formation of 800 others from which approximately 13,000 U.S. paratroopers jumped on D-Day, June 6, 1944, the beginning of the liberation of France in the last two years of World War II



[Historic Aircraft that Led the D-Day Aerial Invasion of Normandy Returns to Europe for 80th Anniversary Commemoration \(commemorativeairforce.org\)](http://commemorativeairforce.org)

What does the "D" in D-Day mean?

In Stephen Ambrose's *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, he writes,

Time magazine reported on June 12 [1944] that "as far as the U.S. Army can determine, the first use of D for Day, H for Hour was in Field Order No. 8, of the First Army, A.E.F., issued on Sept. 20, 1918, which read, 'The First Army will attack at H-Hour on D-Day with the object of forcing the evacuation of the St. Mihiel salient.'" (p. 491)

In other words, the D in D-Day merely stands for *Day*. This coded designation was used for the day of any important invasion or military operation. For military planners (and later historians), the days before and after a D-Day were indicated using plus and minus signs: D-4 meant four days before a D-Day, while D+7 meant seven days after a D-Day.

In Paul Dickson's *War Slang*, he quotes Robert Hendrickson's *Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*,

Many explanations have been given for the meaning of D-Day, June 6, 1944, the day the Allies invaded Normandy from England during World War II. The Army has said that it is "simply an alliteration, as in H-Hour." Others say the first D in the word also stands for "day," the term a code designation. The French maintain the D means "disembarkation," still others say "debarkation," and the more poetic insist D-Day is short for "day of decision." When someone wrote to General Eisenhower in 1964 asking for an explanation, his executive assistant Brigadier General Robert Schultz answered: "General Eisenhower asked me to respond to your letter. Be advised that any amphibious operation has a 'departed date'; therefore the shortened term 'D-Day' is used." (p.146)

Brigadier General Schultz reminds us that the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944 was not the only D-Day of World War II. Every amphibious assault—including those in the Pacific, in North Africa, and in Sicily and Italy—had its own D-Day.

[80th Anniversary of D-Day at Normandy American Cemetery | American Battle Monuments Commission \(abmc.gov\)](#)

A **Blue Star Family** is a military family with a loved one serving in the U.S. military during a time of conflict. A **Gold Star Family** is a military family that has lost a loved one during war.

One Blue Star represents one family member serving in the Armed Forces. The Banners can have up to four (4) stars, signifying that four members of that family are serving simultaneously in military uniform on Active Duty. Sadly, war causes death!... When the Blue Star is replaced by a Gold Star, that signifies the "hostile-fire" death of a family member of that household. Blue Star Service Banners, while widely used across America during WWI and II, were not so enthusiastically embraced during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.



WHITE STAR FAMILIES

The White Star designation recognizes families who have lost a service member to suicide, whether they were military or first responders.

We can't forget about **White Star** families who have lost an active duty or veteran family member to suicide. Since 2001, more than 114,000 veterans have died by suicide.

[Restore The Alabama War Memorial - The American Legion Department of Alabama \(legional.org\)](#)

A LETTER FROM: Kenneth Paschal House of Representative, District 73

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to share some exciting news with you regarding the progress of funds for The Alabama War Memorial Restoration project. The attached bill, SB66 lines 22-24, has recently passed both the Senate and House Chambers and is now awaiting the Governor's signature for approval. This bill allocates \$300,000 from the Veterans' Assistance Fund to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the restoration project.

It's truly an honor to be a part of such a meaningful initiative that will positively impact our veterans and their families. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to this cause.

Kenneth Paschal
House of Representative, District 73
House Military & Veterans Affairs, Vice Chair
U.S. Army Retired (205) 807-7252

Eligibility For VA Disability Benefits

VA disability compensation provides tax-free monthly payments. If you have a service-connected condition, you may be eligible for compensation. A service-connected condition means an illness or injury that was caused by—or got worse because of—your active military service. Keep reading to find out if you may be eligible.

Does VA automatically give you health insurance?

You can get free VA health care for any illness or injury that we determine is connected to your military service (called a “service-connected disability”). You may also be eligible for more free VA health care based on factors like your disability rating, service history, or income.

Do all US veterans get free healthcare?

If a Veteran has health insurance, it may cover the cost of co-pays. VA will provide combat Veterans free medical care for any illness possibly associated with service during a period of hostility for five years from the Veteran's release from active duty. All Veterans are Potentially Eligible.

What does the VA cover for funerals?

Service-related Death

VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001, or up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 11, 2001. If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

Am I eligible for VA disability compensation?

You may be eligible for VA disability benefits or compensation if you meet both of these requirements.

Both of these must be true:

- You have a current illness or injury (known as a condition) that affects your mind or body, **and**
- You served on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training

And at least one of these must be true:

- You got sick or injured while serving in the military—and can link this condition to your illness or injury (called an in-service disability claim), **or**
- You had an illness or injury before you joined the military—and serving made it worse (called a pre-service disability claim), **or**
- You have a disability related to your active-duty service that didn't appear until after you ended your service (called a post-service disability claim)

Presumptive conditions

For some conditions, we automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. We call these presumptive conditions.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

Find out more about these categories of presumptive conditions:

- [A chronic \(long-lasting\) illness that appears within 1 year after discharge](#)
- [An illness caused by contact with contaminants \(toxic chemicals\) or other hazardous materials](#)
- [An illness caused by your time spent as a prisoner of war \(POW\)](#)

More than 1 million vets have received new toxic exposure benefits

[Veterans Affairs officials](#) have now approved more than 1 million claims through the [sweeping toxic exposure legislation](#) signed into law 22 months ago, a milestone White House officials praised as evidence they are “doing better” for veterans seeking help with their service injuries.

VA has paid out more than \$5.7 billion in earned PACT Act-related benefits to nearly 890,000 veterans and survivors through the claims, officials said. The department has also conducted more than 5.4 million toxic exposure screenings over the last two years, designed to help alert patients and physicians to possible lingering service issues.

[More than 1 million vets have received new toxic exposure benefits \(militarytimes.com\)](#)

Guest Speaker – May meeting SAVC:



Mr. Shaun Shenk is the Chief of Community and Public Affairs for the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System.



South Alabama Veterans Council VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

CDR Pete Riehm, USN (Ret)

Pete grew up in Texas as a first-generation American born to German immigrants. Working his way through college, he enlisted in the US Naval Reserve. After graduating from the University of Houston, Pete was commissioned into the United States Navy through Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island.

As a Surface Warfare Officer, Pete served in varied positions at sea and ashore. Deploying multiple times to the Mediterranean and Middle East, he participated in The Cold War, Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia, the aborted invasion and occupation of Haiti, and conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. As Commanding Officer of the US Navy & Marine Corps Reserve Center Mobile, Alabama, he trained and prepared troops for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

After 21 years of Naval service, Pete embarked on a new journey in 2005, transitioning to private business where he has excelled as a Commercial Real Estate broker with CRE Mobile. His success is evident in his specialization in industrial properties, and his versatility and accomplishments with office, land, multi-family, and hospitality properties. He consistently achieves impressive sales and leases, averaging over \$10 million annually.

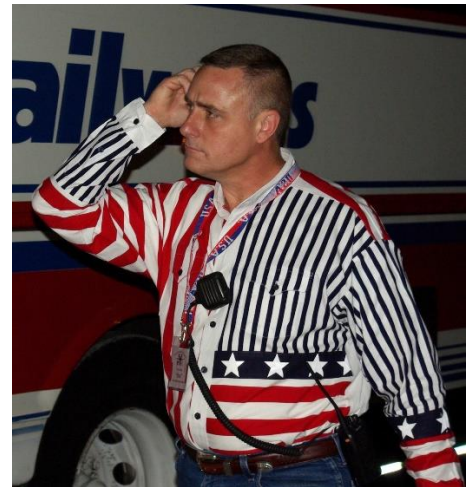
In early 2020, Pete's dedication to his community was recognized with a highly sought-after and elite designation, SIOR. This was followed by even greater recognition at the end of 2020, when he was named the 2020 Mobile Area Veteran of the Year. Pete's ongoing community service, a testament to his commitment, is very well deserved. At the start of 2021, Pete played a pivotal role in the rebranding initiative and creation of CRE Mobile, further demonstrating his dedication to his community.

Always active in politics, Pete started broadcasting Common Sense Radio weekly in 2011 and syndicated his Common Sense column weekly since 2015. Blessed more than he deserves, Pete is married to Debra and has three grown children, an adopted son, and three grandchildren.

Languages - English, German, Italian



CDR Pete Riehm, USN (Ret)



Veteran of the Year 2020 Pete Riehm, with Chester Feagan, WWII Veteran, Trent, Debra

VVA JOE BIRINDELLI CHAPTER 864

VVA Joe Birindelli Chapter 864 April 23, 2024
Charter Member and Chapter Board of Director Brian Duffill conducted a momentous swearing-in ceremony for the elected chapter officers, marking the beginning of their term for the 2024 – 2025 year. In a touching gesture, Phil Olive stood in for President Terry Skinner, who is currently hospitalized. Elected chapter officers for 2024-2025 are:

Chapter President: Terry Skinner
Chapter Vice President: Mark Oehler
Chapter Secretary: Ron Moore
Chapter Treasurer: Val Obregon

The Mobile Bay Area Veterans of the Year 2019 title was rightfully bestowed upon Vietnam Veterans from all eras in recognition of their significant contributions and sacrifices.

President Steve Carey recently presented Pastor Bennie Richardson of Baldwin County with a well-deserved medallion.



BATTLESHIP MEMORIAL PARK

HISTORY'S MONUMENTS ON DISPLAY,
CEREMONIES IN A DIGNIFIED WAY.
SELF-GUIDED TOUR BESIDE THE BAY,
WHERE THOUSANDS ENJOY EACH DAY.

BATTLESHIP ALABAMA & SUBMARINE DRUM,
ARE TWO ATTRACTIONS OUTDONE BY NONE.
AMPHIBIOUS TOUR OF MOBILE, RIVER & BAY,
AN ADVENTURE OF FUN CONDUCTED ALL DAY.

JOMAC

QUILTS OF VALOR – MOBILE, AL

George Hudson Place has a place
in the Class of 2024.

When it was named Alba High School, George Hudson Place quit school at age 16 to join the U.S. Navy.

This week, he was back at school. The Grand Bay school, now named Alma Bryant High, awarded Place his high school diploma. He graduated at age 98.

Hudson received his QOV for his 18-month service in the South Pacific in WWII. He joined the Navy at age 16 to get the pair of shoes he so desperately needed. Alma Bryant awarded him his high school diploma in May 2024.



AIR & SPACE FORCES ASSOCIATION (AFA) HONORS EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS FROM BALDWIN AND MOBILE COUNTIES

Press Release:

The Air & Space Forces Association (AFA) local Chapter President, Colonel Steve Carey, recently honored 4 exceptional teachers from Baldwin and Mobile Counties. In the spirit of Christie McAuliffe, the Air & Space Force Association recognized these teachers for their demonstrated excellence in education, focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math to prepare our young students for the aerospace technological challenges of the future. Colonel Carey noted, "These teachers are the key to shaping young minds and helping them prepare for a fast-paced and technologically centered future that requires STEM smarts blended with critical thinking and problem-solving." Baldwin County teachers Shannon Stanton from Rockwell Elementary School and Scott Larson from North Baldwin Center of Technology, along with Mobile County teachers Christy LeGros from Barton Academy and Mischa Armstrong from Baker High School, were honored with a Certificate and \$100 check for their commitment and dedication to their students.

ARMED FORCES DAY



On the momentous occasion of Armed Forces Day, Ed's Seafood continued its revered tradition by presenting the esteemed Veteran of the Year awards to the deserving recipients, Horace Bubba Jackson & Tom Claxton. We express our profound gratitude for your steadfast service, which is the cornerstone of this event.

Ed's Seafood Shed may have just celebrated one year in its new location, but the eatery has been satiating hungry bellies with gumbo and fried seafood for 24 years.

Ed's Seafood Shed started as a new venture into the restaurant business by Ed & Barbara Bridges in 2000. Located on "the Causeway," serving up great Southern Hospitality, Free coleslaw, and amazing Fried Seafood cooked "The Old Mobile Way," as Ed would say. The Gulf Shrimp & the amazing view were so spectacular the word soon got out. Iconic classics like Grits, Greens, Gumbo, and the now infamous "Yo Mama's Platter," were mainstays. Eventually, they started grilling a little bit, too, but Gulf Fried shrimp remains king to this day. After Tons of fried shrimp, coleslaw, and bushwhackers, Ed and Barbra were contemplating hanging up the aprons and traveling a bit more. Enter "Panini" Pete Blohme and Nick Dimario of PP Hospitality Group. The perfect local restaurant guys to shepherd the brand into the future. With the addition of some lighter grilled items and creative beverages, Ed's found new life and roared forward. The reputation and quality of Ed's was maintained for the next 4 years until a tragic fire took the building out. Unfortunately unable to feasibly rebuild on the original site. A new location in Spanish Fort Proper. After an amazing transformation through art and adding garage doors to bring the outside in. The NEW Ed's Seafood Shed reopened to rave reviews



"Panini" Pete Blohme and Nick Dimario of PP Hospitality Group



Pictured: Tom Claxton, Bubba Johnson & family, Patrick Downing, Pete Blohme, Nick Dimario

South Alabama Veterans Council celebrated Armed Forces Day in the Honors Pavilion at Battleship Memorial Park. The event was free and open to the public.

ADML Endel Lee, Jr., USN (Ret), graced us as the guest speaker. LTC Lou Lartigue, (Ret), President SAVC, commenced the event with a prayer. The P.L. Wilson Detachment #447 presented the colors, symbolizing our unity. The newly selected Crewmates led the Pledge, a testament to our shared commitment. CDR Pete Riehm, USN (Ret), served as the MCee, guiding us through the event. Tom Claxton, Commandant PL Wilson MCL, and MGYsgt Cynthia House, USMC, (Ret) inaugurated the reception with a cake cutting, marking the beginning of our collective celebration. Thank you Christine Elser for getting the cake and setting up the reception area.



**MORIAL DAY
HONORING AND REMEMBERING**

Flag Lowering Ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Battleship Memorial Park



**Jesse Andrews Jr. Detachment
Marine Corps League**

Judge Advocate Jerry Cherne was the guest speaker at the Flag-Lowering Ceremony. Marine Robert King and Marine Carl Jozaitis also attended the ceremony.



CDR Pete Riehm; SAVC Vocalist - Janie Neal; PL Wilson MCL; SAVC Lou Lartigue; Vets Recover; Miss Shirey our Miss Gulf Coast; Lawrence Carter

**Mobile National Veterans Cemetery
Virginia St., Mobile, AL**

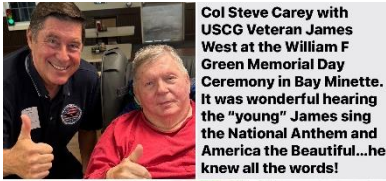


**Alabama State Veterans Cemetery,
Spanish Fort, AL**



Porter Buschell, Trent Riehm, Walter Ballard, Guest Speaker JD Crowe with Dr. Barry L. Booth
Scouts placed flags at the cemetery

THE PLEDGE...there are many years between Trent Riehm and Korean veteran Walter Ballard ...but their hearts are focused on the memory of those who preserved our freedoms ...as Porter Buschell leads the pledge.



Col Steve Carey with USCG Veteran James West at the William F Green Memorial Day Ceremony in Bay Minette. It was wonderful hearing the "young" James sing the National Anthem and America the Beautiful...he knew all the words!



W F Green Veterans Home

**MEMORIAL DAY FLAG RELAY
Mobile County**



**BALDWIN COUNTY MEMORIAL DAY
FLAG RELAY**



Cross the Divide:

Thanks to board CTD President Endel Lee (RDML, US Navy, Retired) and everyone who participated in the Memorial Day Flag Relay Run this Memorial Day! Thank you for your partnership in remembering and honoring those who have given their last full measure of devotion.

[Cross the Divide - GuideStar Profile](#)

Gulf Coast Silkies Ruck

Facebook: *David R Tanner*

On Saturday, May 25, around 100 veterans from all services gathered for the [Gulf Coast Silkies Ruck Memorial Day Silkies Ruck](#). Some vets have been out of service for 20 or 30 years, some just a few, or are currently active. Once again, they got under their gear and laced up the boots for a 10-mile journey in the Deep South heat. The result of 2 wartime generations and its aftermath of those left behind. The cold beer and water flowed.

Marines who were mostly strangers to one another before the day revealed and took part in esprit de corps that is synonymous with being a Marine and the obvious outcast of the group. Onlookers drove by observing. Some honored by honking their horns, some put their heads down in prayer, and some waved and said thank you. Others shouted names of the fallen they knew. A business owner opened her doors and arms when a break was taken in the parking lot.

As the formation made its way onto the beach heading east, vacationers stopped what they were doing. Some stood on their feet with their hand over their heart; some saluted the colors as they passed, and some shouted their prior service respective battle cries. As the March turned into The Flora-Bama, large groups stood on their feet in an ovation. The vocalist on stage performed the national anthem via guitar as the Flora-Bama staff cooled down the vets with fruit, ice, and, of course, refreshments.

I was proud that day. I often wonder if the country is dying a slow death with the way things are. However, I believe that everyone grasped the concept that it wasn't about the 10-mile trek or the participants but about the unforgotten fallen and the nation. It was a good meaningful day. Semper Fi

"Honor is simply the morality of superior men."
-H.L. Mencken



JUNE DATES TO REMEMBER

- Don't Give Up The Ship Day – [June 1](#)
- D-Day Invasion Anniversary – [June 6](#)
- Flag Day – [June 14](#)
- Pause for the Pledge Day – [June 14](#)
- US Army Birthday – [June 14](#)
- Bunker Hill Day – [June 16](#), 2024 (State of Massachusetts)
- United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday – [June 23](#)
- PTSD Awareness Day – [June 27](#)
- Operation Red Wings Observance – [June 28](#)



Warrior Legacy Ranch is happy to announce that General Kenneth McKenzie (Ret.) has joined the Board of Directors! His leadership and dedication to our nation's service members will be invaluable as we continue our mission.

Welcome aboard, General McKenzie!

MOBILE MEMORIAL
GARDENS CEMETERY
MEMORIALIZING MEMORIES®



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



Saucy Q Bar B Que

NEXT SAVC MEETING
Tuesday, June 18, 8:30 a.m.
Saucy Q BBQ
1111 Government St—Mobile AL

SAVC meeting -Our meeting starts at 0830 a.m., but we like to gather earlier for breakfast or coffee and just talk about Veterans Stuff and what is going on.

– Lou

South Alabama Veterans Council Minutes May 21, 2024 Meeting Chaplain Lloyd Michael Austin “LMA” provided breakfast

1. Welcome & Call to Order, President Lou Lartigue
Lartigue called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. –54 in attendance - Location Vets Recover, 1200 Springhill Ave.
2. Opening Prayer & Pledge, Rev. Michael Austin Lou Lartigue.
3. Introduction and welcome to new attendees, Lou Lartigue
4. Newsletter & Minutes, Fran Barber-Bruyn, Secretary
Minutes for the April meeting were mailed in the newsletter. Nine snail mail newsletters and 550 emails. Minutes approved as read.
5. Treasury & Grant Presentations, Tom Schwarz, April hat = \$138.00. Grant received from Tails & Trails, \$2000.00 presented by Tom Claxton.
6. Navy & Veterans News: Pete Riehm reported on Memorial Day Activities.
7. Current Veterans Activities and & AL News – Pat Downing.
8. AL Veterans Cemetery Foundation, Joe Buschell
9. USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, Pat Downing
10. RADM Endel Lee reported on the Memorial Day Flag Relay.
11. Veteran Memorial Recovery Team, Fran Barber-Bruyn
Introduced VMRT Exec Board and Advisory Board, presented certificates to Vets Recover, Uniti Fiber “Proud to Serve,” and Michael James, MPD (Ret) for their volunteer service at Historic Oaklawn Cemetery.
12. Alabama Chapter, 92d Inf. Div. Assoc. Eddie Irby Jr. reported on the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Ceremony on March 29. June 6, D-Day program at Mobile Library.
13. Guest Speaker: GCVHCS, Mr. Shaun Shenk is the Chief of Community and Public Affairs for the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System.
Eric Reynolds gave a brief report on men's health.
14. Topics of Interest & Upcoming Events, Lou Lartigue
Warrior Legacy Ranch
15. Good of the Order
16. Close – Meeting adjourned at 10:15 am.
Fran Barber-Bruyn, Secretary
SAVC