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

NEXT SAVC MEETING – Tuesday, November 19, 2024 – 8:30 a.m.

Vets Recover – 1200 Spring Hill Ave – Mobile, AL

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

Presidents Corner:

"We are entering winter and enjoying the moderate weather. I would hope Mother Nature will continue to bless us with great weather; but continue to do your buddy checks.

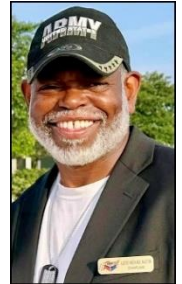
September and October were busy months for Alabama Veterans. We saw our Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veteran Affairs, Admiral Kent Davis, dragged unjustly through the political morass generated on Capitol Hill. The SAVC stands behind the Commissioner. I encourage each and every Veteran to become knowable and aware of what has transpired and what we have to do to protect our Veteran Rights in Alabama. Take a close at the Op-Ed. in this newsletter and get educated or get taken advantage of (I am trying to say it nicely). This Veteran fight is not over so stay tuned and stay involved. Talk to your local Legislative Reps, and let your vote talk!

I want to also wish every Veteran out there a very Great Veterans Day. Be proud of your service and attend the local events that honor your service to our Nation."

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



Chaplains Corner



Greetings everyone

It's There are Giants in the Promise. Read Numbers 13:33

"And there we saw the Giants, the sons of Anak, Which come of the Giants: and we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so were we in their sight."

God made the children of Israel a promise to give them a land flowing with milk and honey. However, He never told them that there were giants in the promised land. Some of our promises have giants in them as well. The point is this: the bigger the promise, the bigger the giants will be. They're not there to stop the promise from coming true but to prove that the promise is way beyond our capability to possess without God. Because it is a giant promise, we need to have giant love, giant faithfulness, giant obedience, giant trust, giant hope, giant healing, giant commitment, and giant dedication.

However, the biggest giant that we need to have is the power and the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

In Jesus' Name, Amen!

*Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin
Chaplain, SAVC*



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Col Downing announced that Col Lou Lartigue, USA (Ret) President of SAVC, was placed in forced retirement (haha) At the Jan 20, 2025 meeting. Col Frank Barrow, USA (Ret), will step in as President of SAVC.

These are just a few of Lou's accomplishments in pictures



Veteran of the Year 2016



Col Lou Lartigue, USA (Ret)
Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year 2016



Veterans Day Parade SAVC – Flags Of Glory



Veterans Day Flag Raising Ceremony-BMP



Blue Star Salute - BMP



Flag Lowering Ceremony



Flags of Glory



Veterans Day Luncheon



SAVC Meeting

OP ED - Alabama's War on Veterans

Bryan Battaglia, U.S. Marines (Retired)

Let me take you back to the year 2018, as it was troubling times for Alabama veterans. The state had one of the absolute worst rates of military veteran suicides, as well as one of the absolute worst rates of opioid addictions among veterans. It also had the longest waiting list in the country to get into the state veterans home system. To make matters worse, the state had closed 17 county-based veterans service offices around the state, leaving wide swaths of Alabama without those valuable offices that serve our military veterans and families - free of charge. Just as embarrassing, our symbolic State War Memorial in Montgomery had fallen victim to disrepair and vandalism.

That's not all. While Alabama's political leaders have routinely demonstrated an apathetic approach in addressing any of those issues, the year before, in 2017, the State Legislature made drastic changes to the GI Dependent Scholarship program, a benefit that had been around since the 1940s to provide scholarships to dependents of disabled veterans. Those 2017 changes eventually cut the scholarship program by 50%. Meanwhile, some of our neighboring states have enacted new and important substantive benefits for their military veterans. For example, Florida passed legislation funding a dental insurance program for its veterans, and Texas passed legislation providing comprehensive property tax exemptions for disabled veterans.

It is also worth mentioning that recently while serving on the State Board of Veterans Affairs (SBVA), we unanimously passed a resolution urging the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to tend to the critical health needs of military veterans who had been exposed to toxic substances at the former Fort McClellan in Anniston. That resolution went to the State Legislature, which passed a similar resolution in a bipartisan fashion. Unfortunately, Governor Ivey refused to sign the legislation, leaving that subset of suffering veterans in the lurch yet again. Meanwhile, a bipartisan group of state and federal elected officials in North Carolina successfully pushed through legislation that provided relief to veterans who have suffered similar health consequences from toxic exposures at Camp Lejeune in that state.

In 2019, the SBVA sought to disrupt the shameful status quo regarding military veterans in Alabama. To help right-size this ship, it conducted a national search for a new State Commissioner of Veterans Affairs and among a pool of more than 60 applicants, chose a candidate with a reputation for innovation, tireless energy, extraordinary leadership

abilities, and out-of-the-box thinking. Since taking office in early 2019, that new Commissioner vigorously assessed, repaired, implemented, and/or revitalized many of the state's shortcomings involving its military veterans and families. Among the many results the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) has benefited under this tenure are the following:

- ADVA opened 12 new veterans service offices in Chambers, Cherokee, Chilton, Clay, Coosa, Crenshaw, Henry, Lawrence, Shelby, Sumter, Washington, and Winston Counties (with plans for another office in Colbert County—plans that may now be in jeopardy). All of this was done without increasing the ADVA's annual budget due to automation and increased efficiencies in the delivery of services. ADVA now leads the nation in the per capita federal veterans benefits due to the expansion of those offices (going from #10 in the nation to #1 in just five years), meaning that federal dollars are flowing into all counties in Alabama.

- Reclassified the accredited Veterans Service Officers who work in those facilities to give them better pay and upward mobility, and vastly upgraded their mobile and office IT assets, addressing a critical attrition rate that had gone unaddressed for years.

- Joined a national partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other states to tackle the horrific issue of veteran suicides in Alabama. Among many other measures, ADVA blanketed the state with public service announcements, billboards, and veteran town halls advertising the 988+1 Veterans Crisis Line. Now, for the first time in a very long time, the veteran suicide rate is actually dropping in the state.

- Established a first-ever Office of Outreach and Engagement to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local agencies as well as dozens of private sector/non-profit/faith-based organizations around the state and nation. Those partnerships have already resulted in a level of cooperation that has led to a gap analysis in veterans services along both demographic and geographic lines and mobilized fresh assets to help our veterans.

- Planned and successfully led the building of a brand-new state veterans home in Enterprise, the Command Sergeant Major Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home, meticulously bringing that project to full operational status within budget and on schedule. This new facility will finally begin to address the embarrassing residency waiting list within the state veterans home system.

- Converted the aforementioned (but now unfortunately slashed) GI Dependent Scholarship program from an outmoded 75-year-old paper-based system that supports more than 15,000 participants to a modern, more efficient web-based system.

- Successfully gathered federal grant money to expand the State Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spanish Fort, using that money to take care of the burial needs of Alabama veterans and their families for the next 10 years.

- Adding to these successful accomplishments, the ADVA even managed to earmark funds in its operational budget to renovate the long-dilapidated State War Memorial, a project that will soon be completed in the state's capital.

I could go on with even more improvements that have finally come to fruition thanks to the invigorated Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs since 2019 and Admiral Kent Davis' leadership. Unfortunately, the innovative Commissioner who led all of these long-overdue improvements has now been driven out of office and maligned by some of the same politicians who have long ignored our state's military veterans and apparently have no interest in the improvements outlined above. None of those politicians, including such prominent names as Kay Ivey, Nathaniel Ledbetter, and Ed Oliver has ever done a significant thing to substantively help veterans.

All of this despicable (but typical) display of Alabama politics came despite three separate votes by the SBVA—which came after hours of investigation by that body in public meetings—to both exonerate Admiral Davis and then ask him to remain in office as our Commissioner. And it all ended with Governor Ivey disregarding the board's voting results and invoking some nebulous and legally questionable "supreme executive power" to unilaterally remove the Admiral from his position in dictatorial fashion. Welcome to the autocracy and world of inflated political egos. Does anyone wonder why the public seems to loathe politics these days?

Admiral Davis has been wronged and unjustly targeted. As virtually everyone now acknowledges, including the Governor herself in her latest in a series of condescending letters to the Admiral, he dared to file an ethics complaint regarding a very suspicious loss of federal grant money that had been intended to address the neglected mental health needs of our state's military veterans. Ethical journalists and even some elected officials, including State Senator Greg Albritton, a veteran himself; along with a few other state legislators who have actually tried to help Alabama veterans—are now rightly beginning to question whether

this is all about whistleblower retaliation. I hope the Federal Government, including the Department of Justice and the Federal Courts, similarly begin to raise questions about this entire debacle.

The next time you encounter a veteran, think about all of this, and how our elected officials have consistently put the needs of our state's military veterans near or at the bottom of their charter. Too many have served in uniform even returning from fighting for our freedoms overseas to find themselves fighting an entirely different war—one being waged by Governor Ivey and other non-veteran-friendly politicians. Show your support for our veterans. Show your support for the summarily dismissed ADVA Commissioner Davis and the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs who are actually working to help all those who have worn the cloth of our nation in our Armed Forces.

I know that I and the other 400,000 Alabama veterans and their families, who collectively make up almost a quarter of our state's population, will remember all of this when it comes to election time. Alabama veterans deserve nothing less!

Bryan Battaglia
U.S. Marines (retired)

(The author is a former member of the Alabama State Board of Veteran Affairs and has nearly 37 years on active duty, culminating with his assignment as the 2nd Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Armed Forces senior ranking Noncommissioned Officer).



Sergeant Major Bryan B. Battaglia, USMC (Ret)
SgtMaj Battaglia is a Gulf War and Iraq War veteran, serving in combat and receiving two Bronze Star Medals, with one for Valor. He also received a Purple Heart Medal for being wounded in action. Among his other awards are the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Office of the Joint Staff Identification Badge, the US Army Parachutist Badge, 8 awards of the USMC expert rifle badge and 2 awards of the expert pistol badge.



South Alabama Veterans Council VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

Mr. Bill Bergman



Bill grew up on his family's ancestral farm in Baldwin County and graduated from Foley High School in 1966. He then attended Yancey College, which later became Faulkner State. In 1968, Bill answered the call and joined the United States Army.

After his initial Army training, Bill was deployed to South Vietnam, where he joined the 286th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance). He served as a crew chief on a UH1 Air Ambulance with the call sign DUSTOFF. During his 20 months in Vietnam as a crew chief, he was involved in the evacuation of hundreds of soldiers from the battlefield, including American soldiers and marines as well as Allied soldiers and civilians.

For his service in South Vietnam, Bill was awarded two Purple Heart Medals, 20 Air Medals, 2 Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal. We know he was a good soldier because he also received the Good Conduct Medal.

After Bill was discharged from the Army, he became a commercial pilot and was qualified to fly more than 40 different types of aircraft. He flew forestry work and crop dusting, traveled to Africa and the Middle East for the State Department's US Agency for International Development, and conducted classified Top-Secret missions in Latin America to support the US War on Drugs. After 45 years as a commercial pilot, Bill retired in 2016.

Bill is currently the Alabama Commander for the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Senior Vice Commander for Disabled American Veterans, Chapter

45, and the Sergeant at Arms for the State of Alabama Department of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

And, of course, Bill is a member of the South Alabama Veterans Council.

So, you can see that, like many of us, Bill may no longer be in the service, but he is...still serving...



Bill Bergman is the new Commander of Alabama MOPH. He has also accepted a position on the Board of the *Military Hall of Honor* in Marion, AL.

The Alabama Military Hall of Honor was established in 1975 and stands today to honor Alabama's Military heroes. Here they are provided a permanent tribute with displays of portrait plaques of inductees and military artifacts. The museum is housed in a building that was built circa 1832 as a law office and then served as the Marion City Hall for forty years. It was moved from the courthouse square to the Marion Military Institute campus to serve as the museum building during the late 1960s.



VETERANS DAY (A Celebration of Friends)

With memories that do not end,
Mental reunion of combat friend.
Take cover, the Point, and Flanks,
Each mission ends with "Thanks".

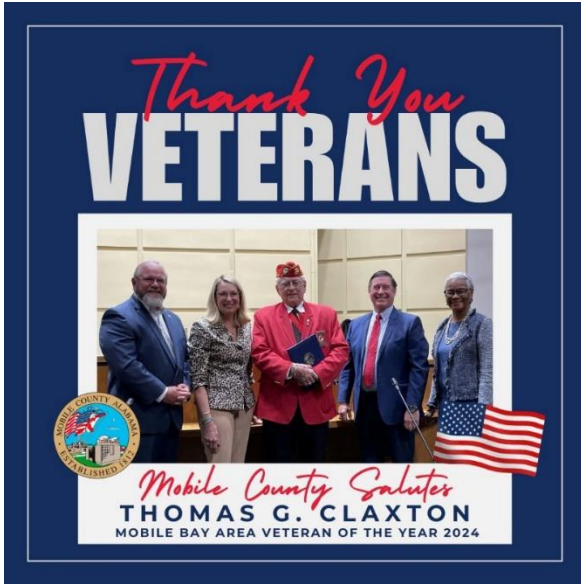
Today's Grunts, Back to GI Joe,
With you under fire from the foe.
Reliving the heat, rain and snow,
With a prayer to the God you know.

JOMAC

Mobile County Commission October 28th Meeting

At the Oct. 28 Commission meeting, the Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year 2024, Thomas "Tom" G. Claxton, and Patriot of the Year 2024, Ret. Sgt Maj Bryan B. Battaglia were recognized respectively for their contributions, dedication, and commitment to the cause of our freedom.

Thank you for your service!



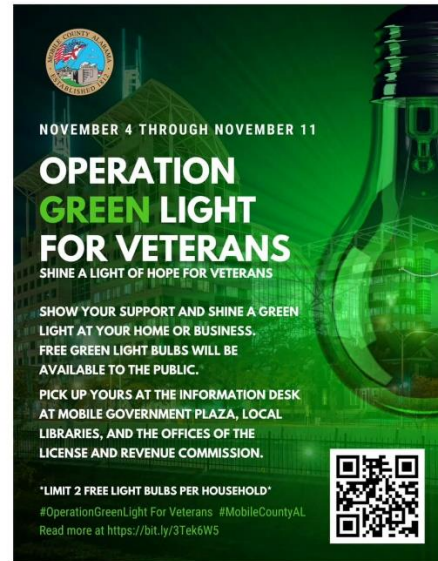
LIFE-LIBERTY-FREEDOM-PEACE

Life, Liberty, Freedom, and Peace have been bought for you by a Soldier, a Sailor, a Marine, an Airman, a Coastguardsman, a Reservist, and a member of the National Guard!

TAKE THE TIME TO THANK THEM
THIS VETERANS DAY.

Joe McCormack
Joe McCormack

Operation Green Light



The week of the Veterans Day holiday, the Mobile County Commission joins local governments across the nation by participating in Operation Green Light to shine a light of appreciation, hope, and support for our nation's veterans.

Mobile County will light the atrium of Mobile Government Plaza green on Monday, Nov. 4, and it will remain green until Monday, Nov. 11. Some downtown businesses and other Mobile locations will also be lit green for the week, and the Mobile RSA buildings will be lit green for a portion of the week.

The Mobile County Commission approved a resolution supporting Operation Green Light on October 28, 2024 (see below) and Commissioners urge residents in all portions of Mobile County to participate.



Commissioners Dueit, Hudson, Ludgood

FIELD OF VALOR FLAG DISPLAY

Honoring and memorializing Veterans who have Served to preserve our freedom. Flag Dedication Ceremony at Battleship Memorial Park Honors Pavilion Presented by the Exchange Club of Mobile.



FIELD OF VALOR

Flag Dedication Ceremony

The Exchange Club of Mobile will host the FIELD OF VALOR, a flag display honoring and memorializing Veterans who have served to preserve our freedom.

WHEN: Sunday, October 27, 2024 at 2pm

WHERE: USS Alabama Battleship Park
in the Aircraft Pavilion

****Free Event & Parking****



FIELD OF VALOR

Dedication Ceremony
Battleship Memorial Park
Sunday, October 27, 2024
2 pm in the Aircraft Pavilion

The Exchange Club of Mobile presents the Field of Valor, a 300 American Flag display honoring, and memorializing Veterans who have served to Preserve our Freedom.

AGENDA

Posting of the Colors	AFROTC Detachment 014A, U of W FL
National Anthem	Gabrielle Corlett and Jacob Mohr
Pledge of Allegiance	Lisa deShazo, Club Secretary
Invocation	Chaplain Kevin Castleberry, USCG Auxiliary
Introductory Remarks	Annesia Miller, Club President
"My Country Tis of Thee"	Gabrielle Corlett and Jacob Mohr
Welcoming Remarks	Lt. Col. William E. Counts, Sr (U.S. Army Retired) Deputy Director, USS Battleship Park
POW/MIA Table	MGySgt Cynthia L. House, Lt. Col Janice Mitchell, GySgt Lester Davison National Montford Point Marine Assoc, Mobile Chapter #33
Keynote Speaker	Daniel A. Rielly, Specialist 5 U.S. Army (1966-1969) Retired Special FBI Agent Adjunct Professor of Criminology, George Mason U Chaplain Kevin Castleberry, USCG Auxiliary
Benediction	Led by Gabrielle Corlett and Jacob Mohr
"God Bless America"	
Exchange Covenant of Service	Mickey McDonnell, Club Director
Retiring of the Colors	AFROTC Detachment 014A U of W FL



POW/MIA MISSING MAN CEREMONY

MGySgt Cynthia House, USMC (Ret);
Col Janice Mitchell USMC, (Ret);
GySgt Lester Davison USMC (Ret)



Keynote Speaker

**Daniel A Rielly, US Army, Retired FBI
President S B. Glove Security Inc.**

Rielly was born in Mobile, AL, and retired from the FBI in 2002. While in the U. S. Army, he achieved the rank of E5 Specialist 5, 1966-1969; following basic training and MOS training, he rotated overseas for Combat service in the Republic of South Viet Nam, Cantho Army Airfield and Cold War service in West Berlin, Germany. and worked as a Combat/ Intelligence Photographer. He was awarded Viet Nam Campaign Ribbons, the 7th Army Commendation, and other routine awards. While working for the FBI, he accomplished a multitude of programs, many of them still in place today.

American Legion Post 250 Flag Retirement Ceremony October 20, 2024



FACEBOOK:

American Legion Auxiliary #199, Eastern Shores, Alabama

Every person who attended, both veterans and vendors, expressed their enthusiasm for making this fair an annual event. The valuable connections made and the shared experiences underscored the importance of supporting our veterans, and we can't wait to do it again next year! Special thanks to Carla Biniecki for her vision and hard work organizing the vendors and the Auxiliary for organizing and staffing the Welcome Table, Gift Basket Table, Forgotten Vets table, and Food table. Thank you to All Dawn Vitale President Unit#199 Auxiliary



Alabama Department Veterans Affairs
Sissy Louise Moore

Suicide Prevention Why Do We Remember

1. To honor the sacrifice for our country
2. Reminder of the Mental Health Challenges our Veterans face
3. Reinforces our commitment to "Leave one behind"

ADVA reports a 5.5% decrease in Alabama Suicide in 2023

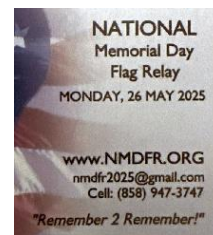


PLANNING IN PROGRESS

National Memorial Day Flag Relay honor and remember our heroes— let's "Remember to Remember." It is expanding from Arlington National Cemetery to San Diego approx. 106 flags, all in the same day. -RDML Endel Lee



Charting the route through the west





Our mission is to honor and support our Veterans and First Responders by organizing impactful events to raise awareness for veteran suicide prevention and to provide access to connect them with valuable local resources. We are dedicated to creating a community where our Heroes and their families feel supported, valued, and empowered. Through our efforts, we aim to advocate for mental health awareness, provide access to resources, and foster a sense of camaraderie among those who have served our country both at home and abroad. Together, we stand strong to ensure that no Veteran, First Responder or their family member ever feel alone in their struggles, and that they always have someone to turn to in times of need.

Join us on the Eastern Shore Trail with local heroes to support IGY6 - Gulf Coast and their vital mission to honor and support our Veterans and First Responders. This inspiring event aims to raise awareness for suicide prevention and provide access to valuable community resources. By partnering with local members and organizations, IGY6 - Gulf Coast is committed to equipping participants with the training and confidence needed to assist our heroes and their families, ensuring they feel supported, valued, and empowered.



SAVE THE DATE! Next Friday, November 8, all four Vet Centers in Alabama will host a Women Veteran's Celebration from 2-5:30 p.m., promoting and acknowledging differing resources and programs provided in Alabama that are geared to women Veterans. This is the first time in the country that state and federal departments have held four events geared toward women Veterans simultaneously.



FLAGS OF GLORY
November 10 – 2 p.m.
Mobile Memorial Gardens

“Flags of Glory” is a week-long tribute to American military service personnel hosted by MMG and presented by the South Alabama Veterans Council. The SAVC is partnering with other local veterans organizations and participating businesses to honor those who have served and sacrificed.

Approximately 250 - 3'x5' American flags will be placed along 1,700 feet of the central roadway in the cemetery as a week-long walk-through and drive-through display. Flags of Glory is a week-long Veterans Day tribute at Mobile Memorial Gardens, Mobile, AL. The PGR will ride in the procession as part of the opening ceremonies of the Mobile Memorial Gardens annual “Flags of Glory” event for Veterans Day Celebration week.

The colors will be presented by P. L. Wilson Marine Corps League Chapter #447, Commandant: Tom Claxton. Mobile Christian Band – under the direction of Robin Holder, Director of Bands, will provide the music, USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park Crewmates and others will be participating in the event. Keynote address will be given by Sergeant Major Bryan B. Battaglia, USMC (Ret)



Mobile Memorial Gardens Cemetery is losing a legend. Vice President Julius Powell is retiring after 35 years. He will be missed by all and promises not to be a stranger. We wish him all the best and hope he enjoys his much deserved retirement. Cheers to Julius!!



USA Veteran's Day Recognition
Game on 02 November 2024

The Athletic Department has designated the 02 November 2024 football game against Georgia Southern as the Veterans Day recognition event.

Again, this year, the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission Patriot of the Year, Veteran of the Year, and the CAPT Hal Pierce Award recipients will be recognized among other Gulf Coast area veterans. Last year's event was great and well-received by all who attended. (Pictures by Annesia Miller)



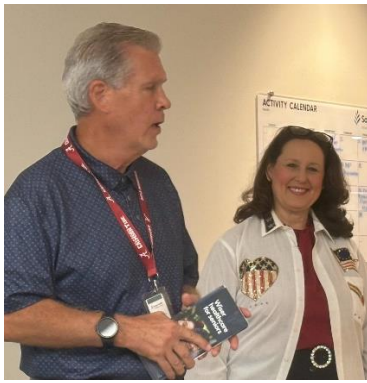
Tom Claxton & Pat Greenwood



Tom Claxton, LTC Jared Sundahl, Dent Boykin

November Military Anniversaries & Observances

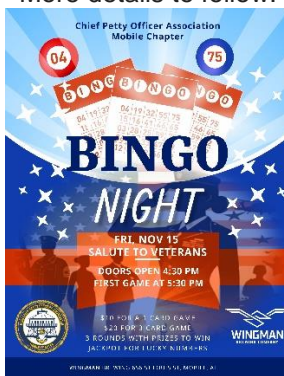
- Marine Corps Birthday (November 10, 1775)
- Veterans Day – November 11 (originally Armistice Day in 1918, renamed Veterans Day in 1954)
- **November 3:** World Jellyfish Day, National Housewife Day, Cliché Day, Daylight Savings Day, Give Someone a Dollar Day, National Accessory Day, National Homemaker Day, National Sandwich Day
- **November 5:** World Tsunami Awareness Day, American Football Day, Election Day, National Advent Calendar Day, National Basketball Day, National Chinese Takeout Day, National Redhead Day, National Stress Awareness Day
- **November 7:** International Merlot Day, National Hug a Bear Day
- **November 8:** World Radiography Day, International Stout Day, National Cappuccino Day, National Parents as Teachers Day, National STEM/STEAM Day, World Pianist Day
- **November 10:** International Accounting Day
- **November 11:** Veterans Day
- **November 13:** World Kindness Day
- **November 14:** World Diabetes Day
- **November 19:** International Men's Day



Nov SAVC meeting Kecia Chambers introduced the guest speaker and Host, Col Phillip Quigley, USA (Ret) Desert Storm Veteran.



CPOA Mobile 50th anniversary - Dec 6, 2024 at Wingman Brewing Company, Downtown Mobile. More details to follow.



THANK YOU ABC SIGNS



SAVC Minutes October 15,, 2024 - Breakfast provided by Sage Health

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Lou Lartigue called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m., with 32 in attendance. The Location was Sage Health Care..
2. **Opening Prayer & Pledge** Lou Lartigue, opening prayer. Pledge led by Jim Jeffries, USA Veteran.
3. **Introduction and welcome—**
4. **Newsletter & Minutes, Fran Barber-Bruyn, Secretary:** The September meeting minutes were included in the newsletter, which was distributed via nine snail mail newsletters and 600 emails. The minutes were approved as read.
5. **Treasury & Grant Presentations, Tom Schwarz** Grant to Dixie Rear Detachment \$300.00. Tom Claxton, PL Wilson Detachment, donated \$500.00 to SAVC, MMG donation of \$30.00, Hat collected 252.00, expenses for POW/MIA programs, secretary supplies, paid Vets Recover \$100. for coffee setup, \$9282. Balance in checking. SAVC will make a contribution to the Hurricane Relief fund,

which is TBD. The grant board meets in January to determine who to distribute grants to. Thank you letter from Dixie Rear Detachment. Chaplain Austin has 501c3 used to help veterans and the homeless. Contributions from Mobile Memorial Gardens. Funds we receive are given back to the VSO and other veteran supporters.

6. Navy & Veterans News: Pete He reported on USNS Comfort Navy ships returning to the port, and the Navy's birthday banquet was a huge success. The Veterans Day Parade application has been sent out, and he reported on the new parade route.

7. Current Veterans Activities and AL News: Jim Jefferies reported on the annual retreat, and Post 250 flag disposal ceremony. Reported on the American Legion players going on to play in major league baseball. Post 199 hosting a Veterans Resource Fair

8. AL Veterans Cemetery Foundation: Pat Downing, 4215 internments, 3rd caretaker position filled, getting 2nd committal shelter, Crest - robotic mower program in working stages. The cemetery received 2 new GEM cars.

9. USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, Pat Downing: Monthly BMP commission meeting at Shiloh Nature Preserve. BMP – procedures outlined for hiring a new director. Maj Gen Janet Cobb is retiring on 12/31/2024, and Pam Jeffcoat is retiring on 12/31/24. It was recommended that Lynne Price be promoted to Deputy Director for Admin of Human Resources.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT—Col Downing announced that Lou Lartigue, President of SAVC, was placed in forced retirement (haha) at the Jan 20, 2025 meeting. Col Frank Barrow, USA (Ret), will step in as President of SAVC.

10. Alabama Dept. of Veteran Affairs: ADML – SissieLouise announced Operation We Remember – focus in September. ADVA reports a 5.5 decrease in Alabama Suicide in 2023. Reported on Alabama's Challenge kicking off in November. Nov 8 celebrating Women's Veterans across the state, in mobile held at Veterans Center on Spring Hill Ave.

11. VMRT: Neil Bruyn reported on clean-up day, Uniti Fiber, Montford Point Marines, VMRT, and a few family members of people interred at Oaklawn.

12. Alabama Chapter 92nd Buffalo Soldiers – no report

Kecia Chambers introduced the guest speaker and Host, Col Phillip Quigley, USA (Ret) Desert Storm Veteran. A veteran who also played American Legion Baseball and the University of Alabama. Quigley was in the ROTC program at Univ of Alabama.

DEVOTED: Brandon McFarland spoke on preventive care.

USCG – CPOA is Celebrating its 50th anniversary on December 6th at Wingman. More info to come.

Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission – MGySgt, order your tables for the Honors Luncheon.

Meeting adjourned 10:10 a.m. Fran Barber - Secretary