

September

# Newsletter

## Welcome!

Alabama continues to go above and beyond in their dedication to Veterans. This month, 175 community partners across the state are participating in Operation We Remember, honoring and remembering the Alabama Veterans who lost their lives to suicide. By participating, they are fostering stronger connections within the Veterans community, creating spaces of remembrance, and creating a reminder that having intentional conversations around mental health can be critical. This collective effort reflects a commitment that extends beyond words. It represents unity, respect, and a shared responsibility to support those who have served. You can view some of these displays in this Newsletter and on our Facebook page. To learn more about the well-being resources available across Alabama, please visit [VetsForHope.com](https://VetsForHope.com).



Commissioner, Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs



## > In this edition.

Operation We Remember  
In Your Community  
Women Veterans  
Employee Spotlight  
Vets for Hope  
Upcoming Podcast  
and more







# OPERATION WE REMEMBER 2025



## IN YOUR COMMUNITY

### District 1 participated in Representative Aderholt's Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony.

The Cullman County office supported Representative Robert Aderholt's Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony on August 29 at the Blount County Multipurpose Center.

### District 2 honored the Legacy of GS2 Esper Williams, WWII U.S. Navy Veteran.

Jefferson County VSO Angela F. Hunter joined members of The American Legion Post 347 in a heartfelt tribute to honor World War II U.S. Navy Veteran GS2 Esper Williams. He was remembered by his niece, retired U.S. Air Force Veteran Brigetta Gibbs, and other family members. GS2 Williams is a hero whose legacy has quietly endured for over five decades through the love and remembrance of his family.

### District 3 participated in Operation We Remember at the Coffee County Commission building.

Alongside many other VSOs and AVSOs, District 3 Dale County VSO Robbie Ray and AVSO Roy Howell Jr. led the installation of an OWR memorial in front of the Coffee County Commission building. Thank you to the 175 participants across the state.



## The Impact.

We are committed to connecting Alabama Veterans with Veteran Service Officers, ADVA staff, and Commissioner Newton to ensure they receive the benefits they have rightfully earned.





# #StriveFor500

Join the ADVA in supporting the Military Women's Memorial's #StriveFor500 campaign. We invite all women Veterans across Alabama to participate as we work to register 500 women from Alabama—preserving the important and impactful histories of women who have served in the military.



It only takes a few minutes  
to register yourself today.  
[www.womensmemorial.org](http://www.womensmemorial.org)

The Military Women's Memorial is the leading memorial and education center honoring the commitment, contributions and experiences of servicewomen.

Three million women have served in or with the Armed Forces since the American Revolution. By contributing names and information to the register, you can help record and preserve stories that will otherwise be lost to history and unknown to future generations.

*Photos provided by VA News, ADVA Deputy Commissioner Sandra Lucas, Miriam Thurber via DVIDS*



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### VSO Jeffrey Bennett provides support for the burial of WWII Prisoner of War

Chilton County Veteran Service Officer Jeffrey Bennett provided support for the internment of Private First Class Norman R. Thomas, a World War II Prisoner of War, in July 2025.



Private First Class Norman R. Thomas

Long-awaited closure was brought to Thomas' family and community in his remains being recovered and positively identified in July 2025.

Private First Class Thomas was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal, Prisoner of War Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Philippine Defense Ribbon, and Honorable Service Award for his bravery and sacrifice.



## Vets For Hope

**Do you need to talk? Do you need help? You are not alone. Other Veterans who understand are here for you.**

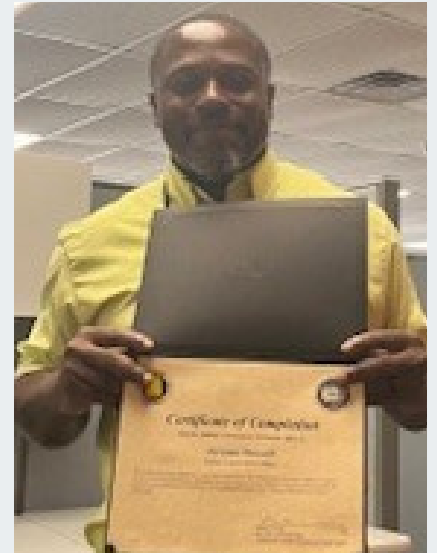
**View crisis intervention resources, find a crisis center or service provider near you, and read more about support and warning signs today at [VetsForHope.com](https://VetsForHope.com)**



SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [VETSFORHOPE.COM](https://VetsForHope.com)







# Welcome to the Team – Permanently!

**Clair Redd – Claims Auditor, A&R**

**David Davis – Veterans Service Officer, Tallapoosa County**

**Jerome Russell – Assistant Veterans Service Officer, Shelby County**

Each of these individuals has demonstrated dedication, professionalism, and a strong commitment to their roles and to our organization's values. We are proud to have them as permanent members of the team and look forward to their continued growth and contributions.

## Did You Know...

**Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
DFAS.mil**

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is an agency responsible for managing financial operations, including payroll and accounting for military personnel, contractors, and federal agencies. Visit their website for information and assistance on avoiding debt, understanding taxes, using myPay, and more.

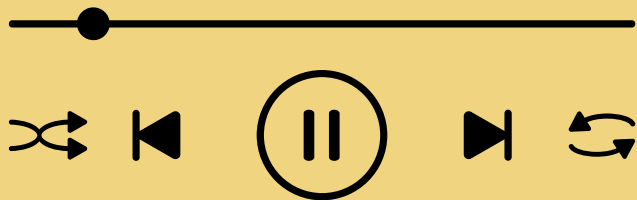






brewing  
connections.

COFFEE WITH THE COMMISSIONER



## Commissioner Newton's First Podcast Episode airs on September 17th!

Join us on YouTube ([youtube.com/@alvetaffairs](https://youtube.com/@alvetaffairs)) for the first episode on 9/17. The podcast will be made available on other platforms soon - pay attention to our social media pages for that announcement.

## State of Alabama Veterans Week announced for Nov. 5 - 11

### UPCOMING EVENTS

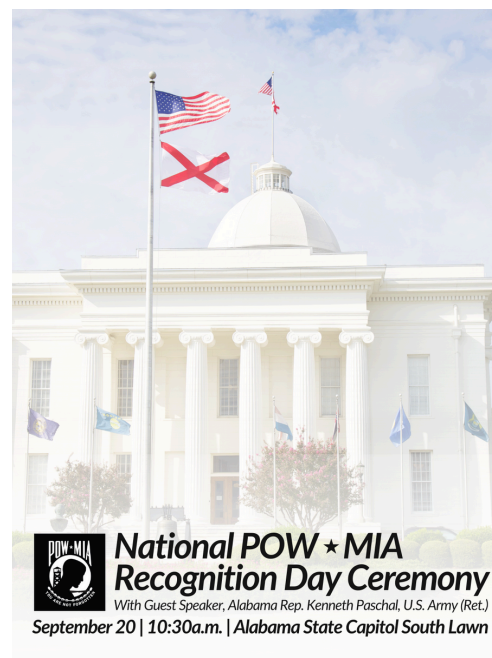
Visit our Events Calendar at [va.alabama.gov/events](https://va.alabama.gov/events) for more info.

#### Sept 20 - National POW / MIA Recognition Day Ceremony

It will take place on the Alabama State Capitol South Lawn with Guest Speaker Alabama Representative Kenneth Paschal at 10:30AM.

#### Sept 26 - Mile in their Boots Memorial Ruck

Hosted by the Birmingham VA Health Care System from 9:30AM to 2:00PM at the VA Annex in Birmingham. Food and vendors will be on site as well.



#### Sept 27 - Spirit of Wellness Conference for Veterans / Military Families

COSA is hosting the Spirit of Wellness Conference at South University in Montgomery.

Planned events include workshops, hands-on activities, resources and information.



Looking to find  
more events?

Visit our Event Calendar at [va.alabama.gov/events](https://va.alabama.gov/events)  
We update the calendar regularly and also share upcoming events on our social media accounts.