

AUGUST

Newsletter



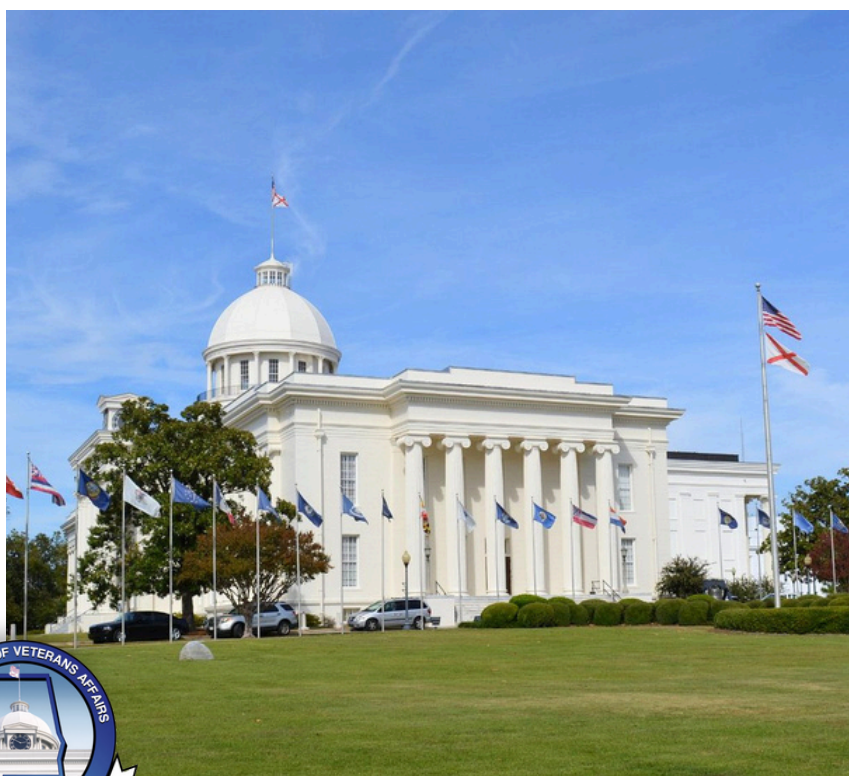
Welcome!

Thank you for taking the time to read this month's edition of our ADVA newsletter. We appreciate your continued interest in the work we're doing to support Alabama's veterans and their families. Each month brings new opportunities to strengthen our services, share important updates, and highlight the efforts taking place across the state. Thank you for staying connected with us and for your commitment to the Alabama's veteran community.

Commissioner, Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs

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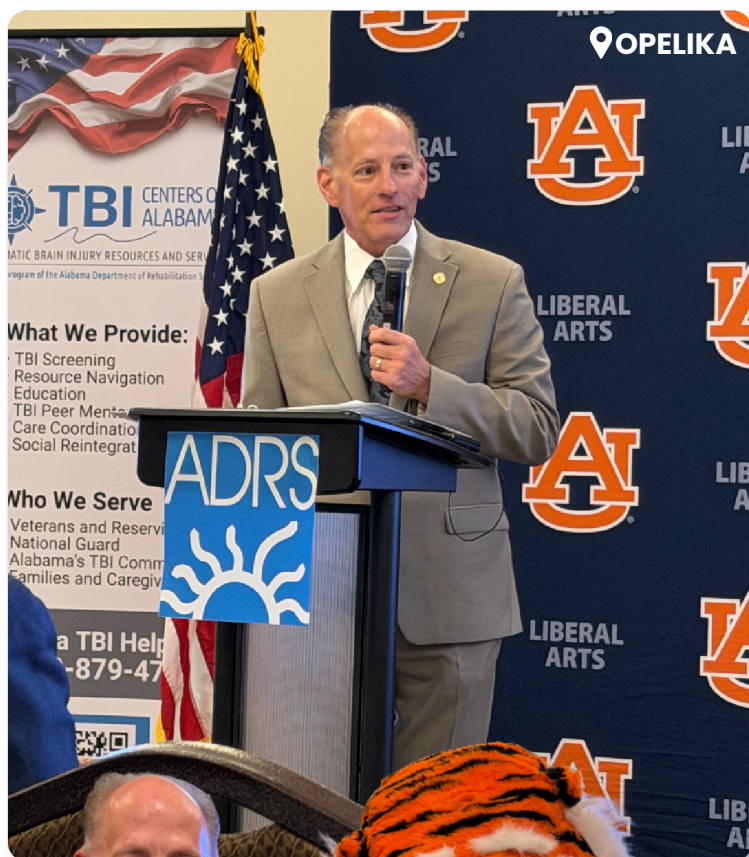


COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

OUR GREATEST STRENGTH

Alabama's greatest strength has always been its people. Across our state, individuals, organizations, businesses, communities and fellow veterans continue to answer the call to serve those who have served our nation. At ADVA, we know we cannot do this work alone. Our partnerships allow us to reach more veterans, better understand their needs and connect them with resources and support in their own communities. In this newsletter, you will see examples of the incredible work taking place across Alabama because of these partnerships.

One of the most rewarding parts of serving as Commissioner is traveling across Alabama and seeing these partnerships in action. From ribbon cuttings to community events, veterans gatherings, and outreach initiatives, these opportunities allow us to meet the people who are making a difference. The stories featured in this newsletter reinforce the same message: when Alabamians work together, we can accomplish more for our veterans than any one organization could accomplish alone. I am grateful for every partner who shares our commitment to ensuring Alabama remains a great place to live, serve, and be a veteran.



HAPPENING AROUND ALABAMA

S.A.F.E.R TOGETHER

Ashville, Alabama



S.A.F.E.R. Together Alabama recently celebrated the launch of GNX Exchange in Ashville, marking the addition of the program's 11th Federal Firearms License (FFL) partner and gun shop in Alabama.

Owner Shane Thomas and his team hosted the event, with support from MOB INC and McLaughlin Detachment 1091 of the Marine Corps League. S.A.F.E.R. Together Alabama will continue expanding its network of community partners across the state, with the next two launches scheduled for Aug. 25 in Orange Beach and Daphne.

To learn more about S.A.F.E.R. Together Alabama, visit www.safertogetheral.org.



TBI CENTER RIBBON CUTTING

Opelika, Alabama



Commissioner Newton and members of the ADVA Outreach team joined the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services in Opelika to celebrate the ribbon cutting of one of five new TBI centers.

The traumatic brain injury (TBI) centers, which will be in Opelika, Tuscaloosa, Mobile, Enterprise, and Huntsville, are focused on serving veterans, National Guard members, and people in long-term traumatic brain injury recovery. You can learn more at rehab.alabama.gov.

USO SHOW HONORS AMERICA

Brundidge, Alabama

Pike County Veterans Service Officer Randy Ross was among those helping bring the spirit of service and patriotism to the Troy community during a recent USO show celebrating America and its people. The event provided an opportunity to recognize the men and women who have served and continue to serve our nation while strengthening the connection between veterans, military families and the communities that support them. Through music, fellowship and patriotic performances, the USO show highlighted the importance of honoring those who have worn the uniform and ensuring their service and sacrifice are never forgotten.



HAPPENING BEYOND ALABAMA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE VETERAN HOMES SUMMER CONFERENCE

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Kim Justice, Executive Director of the State Veterans Home Program, and State Veterans Homes directors Charlie Allen, Samantha Wise, Hiliary Hardwick, Charlotte Robinson, and Kathryn Fuller recently attended the 2026 NASVH Summer Conference in Oklahoma City. The conference provided an opportunity to connect with colleagues from state veterans homes across the nation, receive updates from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and participate in educational sessions focused on the long-term care industry. There was also the opportunity to explore the latest products and services available to support the care and well-being of veterans living in state veterans homes.

NASDVA ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

Savannah, Georgia



Commissioner Jeff Newton, Deputy Commissioner Sandra Lucas, and members of the ADVA team were in Savannah, August 8-13, at the National Association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs Annual Training Conference.

Look for more information in the next newsletter!

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL WOMEN VETERANS ENROLLMENT SUMMIT

San Antonio, Texas

Women Veterans Coordinator Andrea Searor joined her counterparts from other states at the first Regional Women Veterans Enrollment Summit, "Boots on the Ground for Boots on the Ground," in San Antonio. The Center for Women Veterans (CWV), in partnership with the Office of Women's Health (OWH), has launched a never-before-done initiative called the Women Veterans Enrollment Initiative, "Boots on the Ground for Boots on the Ground," Five Regional Summits! Instead of you coming to the summits, the summits will come to you and with it, ... all of the VA! Keep an eye out for more information on the Southeast Summit - ALL Women Veterans are invited!!

Visit the [Women Veterans Enrollment Initiative - Center for Women Veterans](#) for more information.



SERVICE & COMMUNITY

WOMEN VETERANS COFFEE



ADVA was proud to host another Women Veterans Coffee, bringing women veterans together for fellowship, conversation and connection. The strong turnout in Montgomery highlighted the importance of creating opportunities for women veterans to share their experiences, build relationships and connect with resources and one another.

We look forward to continuing these opportunities to connect and strengthen the community of women veterans across Alabama. Mark your calendar for 7 a.m. on November 13 for the next Women Veterans Coffee, hosted at the Alabama Veterans Resource Center.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Tim Waters

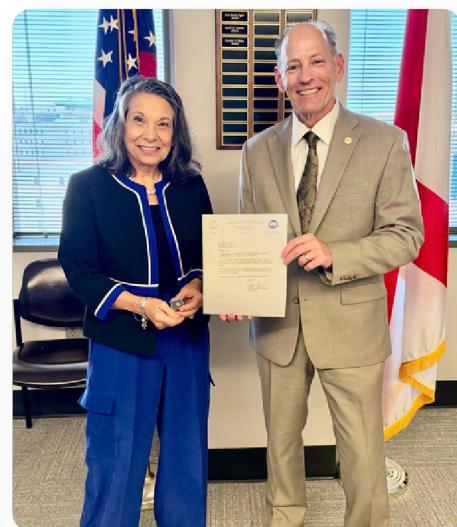
Shelby County Veterans Service Officer

Congratulations to Tim Waters on his retirement following 11 years of dedicated service as a Veterans Service Officer in Shelby County. He received a retirement plaque from Commissioner Newton and gifts from his colleagues across the state.

Join us in showing sincere gratitude to Mr. Waters for serving veterans with professionalism and compassion while helping them access the benefits and resources they earned through their service.



CELEBRATING DEDICATED SERVICE



Deputy Commissioner Sandra Lucas was recently presented a 10-year service pin by Commissioner Jeff Newton, honoring her 10 years of combined dedicated state service. Mrs. Lucas served various roles with the state of Alabama before joining ADVA as the Assistant Commissioner of Outreach in 2023 and being appointed as the first female Deputy Commissioner in 2025.



Veterans and Family Resource Navigator Sissy Louise Moore recently received her 5-year service pin from Commissioner Newton. Since joining ADVA in August 2021, Ms. Moore has excelled at building relationships and communicating directly to veterans, community organizations, and service providers.

PURPLE HEART DAY IN ALABAMA



PROCLAMATION STATION

Across Alabama, communities came together to recognize Purple Heart Day on August 7, honoring the service members who were wounded or killed in combat. These observances are an important reminder of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have worn our nation's uniform and their courage required to serve. By pausing to recognize Purple Heart recipients, communities across Alabama help ensure their service and sacrifice are remembered, honored and never forgotten.



LORENZO NATHAN ON WBRC

State Board of Veterans Affairs member Lorenzo Nathan joined Sheldon Haygood on WBRC 6 News in August. Mr. Nathan, who is also the Alabama Senior Vice Commander for the Military Order of the Purple Heart, used the opportunity to help educate viewers about the sacrifice represented by the Purple Heart, to recognize veterans who have received the distinguished decoration, and highlight the continued commitment of the Military Order of the Purple Heart to remembering their fellow veterans and supporting the broader veteran community.



• AUGUST 7, 1782



General George Washington created the **Badge of Military Merit**, the predecessor of the Purple Heart, to recognize exceptional service by enlisted soldiers.

• MAY 3, 1783



Sergeants **Elijah Churchill**, **William Brown**, and **Daniel Bissell Jr.** became the first recipients of Washington's original Badge of Military Merit.

• FEBRUARY 22, 1932



The Purple Heart was officially revived by **General Douglas MacArthur** on the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth for soldiers wounded in combat or recognized for meritorious service.

• OCTOBER 26, 1942



**Nurse Is First Woman
To Get Purple Heart**



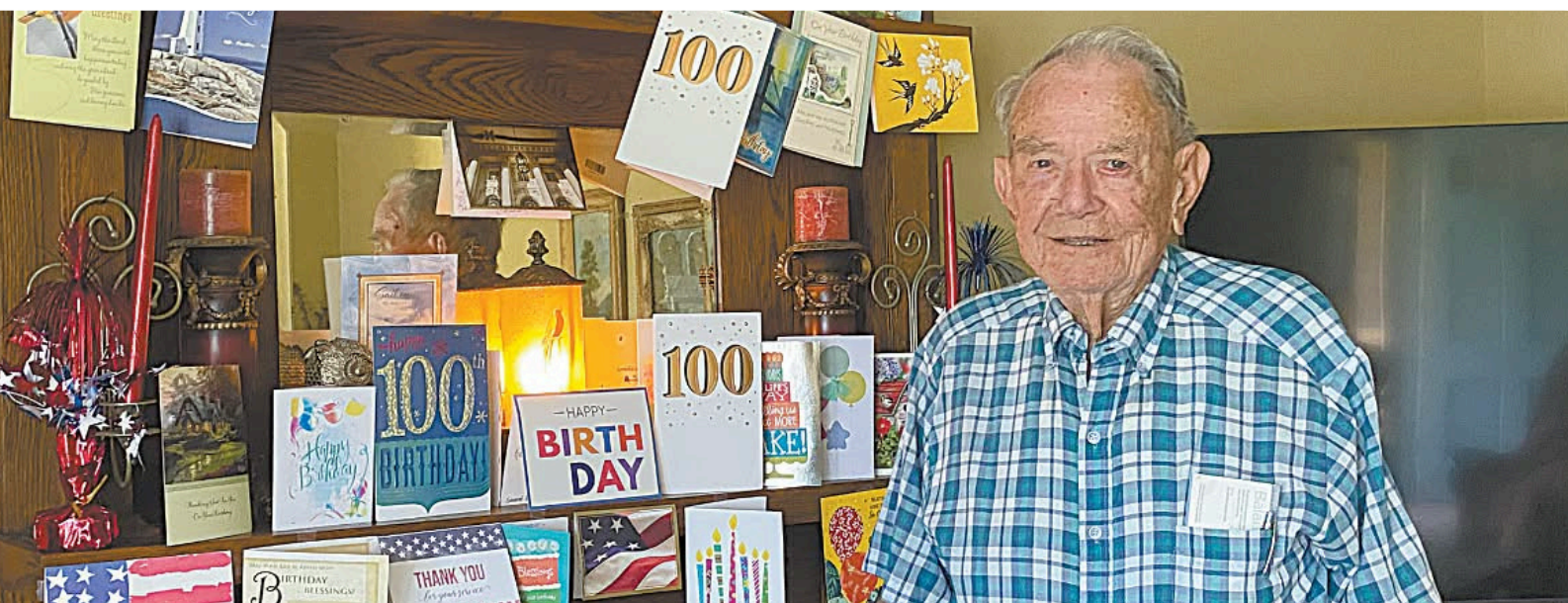
Lt. Annie G. Fox, an Army nurse who served during the attack on Pearl Harbor, became the first woman to receive the Purple Heart.

• 2014 - PRESENT DAY



The first official Purple Heart Day was celebrated on **August 7, 2014** and has continued to honor U.S. service members who are wounded or killed in combat.

CELEBRATING HAROLD NELSON



A LIFE WELL LIVED

In late July, Marshall County Veterans Service Officer Jeremiah Fulenchek presented Harold H. Nelson with a Certificate of Appreciation from Commissioner Jeff Newton during a celebration of Mr. Nelson's 100th birthday. The certificate recognized Mr. Nelson's honorable service as a World War II Navy veteran and celebrated his century of life and service to his country, family, and community.

ADVA is proud to recognize Mr. Nelson for his service and sacrifice and to celebrate this remarkable milestone alongside his family, friends and fellow veterans.



DEDICATION TO SERVICE

Harold H. Nelson was born on July 17, 1926, in the Rock Springs Community near Albertville, Alabama. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on Dec. 21, 1944, and served as a Seaman First Class aboard the aircraft carrier USS Cowpens (CVL-25) until June 21, 1946.

During World War II, Mr. Nelson participated in historic operations in the Pacific Theater. He served aboard one of the first American aircraft carriers to enter Tokyo Bay following Japan's surrender and remained during the Allied occupation, including operations supporting the activation of Yokosuka Airfield and liberation of Allied prisoners of war.

For his service, Mr. Nelson received the World War II Victory Medal, the Philippine Liberation Medal, and the American Campaign Medal.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & MORE

THE ADKINS HOME IS RIGHT ON SCHEDULE!

Restoration of the Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home remains on schedule to welcome veteran residents back in September!



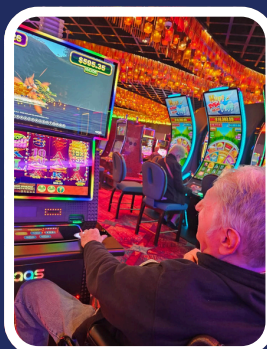
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OUT AND ABOUT!

ADVA's State Veterans Homes Program provides skilled-nursing care and support to veterans while also emphasizing fellowship, engagement, and quality of life. Each home offers a variety of activities designed around residents' interests, including opportunities both on-site and in the community.

Each home regularly provides residents with opportunities to get out, enjoy new experiences, and build lasting memories through outings and activities. Whether it is a community event, a trip to a local attraction, shopping, dining, or simply spending time together outside the home, these outings give veterans opportunities for camaraderie, connection, and fun.



UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 20

VETEREANS LEGAL CLINIC

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM OF THE GULF
MOBILE, AL
10 AM - 2 PM

AUGUST 28

PTSD + MORAL INJURY WORKSHOP

VESTAVIA HILLS CIVIC CENTER
VESTAVIA HILLS, AL 35901
8 AM - 4 PM

SEPTEMBER 11

HUNTSVILLE 2ND ANNUAL MEMORIAL RUCK

U.S. SPACE & ROCKET CENTER
HUNTSVILLE, AL
10 AM - 2 PM

SEPTEMBER 12

TAKE A VETERAN FISHING DAY

RICE PAVILION
WEDOWEE, AL
6:30 AM - 1 PM

SEPTEMBER 16

HUNTSVILLE RESOURCE + JOB FAIR

140 RESEARCH BLVD
MADISON, AL
10 AM - 2 PM

LEARN ABOUT MORE
UPCOMING EVENTS AND
OTHER VETERANS
RESOURCES BY SCANNING
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