OCTOBER

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.

Jeff Newton
Commissioner, Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs

In this edition

Commissioner's Corner
Breaking Ground in North Alabama
The Cemetery Report
Adkins Homecoming
SBVA Quarterly Meeting
Discussing Veterans Mental Health
ADVA Turns 81!
Honoring Davy Daughtry's Legacy
and more.



COMMISSIONER'S *CORNER*





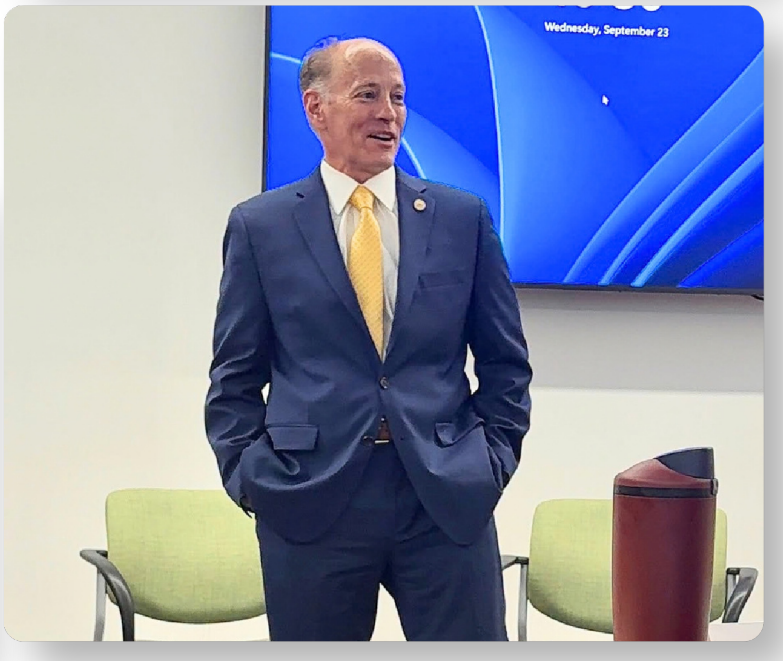
This fall has provided a unique opportunity for ADVA Commissioner Jeff Newton to hit the road and spend time connecting with communities and advocating for Alabama's veterans. During the busy month, he made numerous trips to North Alabama, including to join Calhoun Community College to celebrate the ribbon cutting of Alabama's fifth Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Center at Calhoun Community College through the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Along with breaking ground on the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery - North Alabama in October, Commissioner Newton also traveled to Athens to discuss the facility's details in a second town hall. The trip also included him sitting down with WHNT News 19 about other ongoing initiatives.

Lastly, any trip to North Alabama isn't complete without visiting the incredible Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home.

These opportunities to shake hands and have intentional one-on-one conversations can unfortunately be few and far between, but they are truly special to Commissioner Newton and moments he treasures.





BREAKING GROUND *IN NORTH ALABAMA*



BREAKING GROUND TO HONOR HEROES

Commissioner Jeff Newton and ADVA celebrated a historic milestone on October 15 with the groundbreaking ceremony for the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery – North Alabama. Located near Maysville in Madison County, this cemetery will be Alabama's second state veterans cemetery and will expand access to burial benefits for veterans and their eligible family members throughout the northern region of the state.

The ceremony brought together veterans, federal, state and local leaders, and community members to celebrate the beginning of this long-awaited project. The incredible turnout reflected the community's overwhelming support and shared commitment to honoring those who have served our nation.

With construction on the horizon, ADVA looks forward to bringing this important project to life and creating a lasting place of honor and remembrance for generations to come.











THE CEMETERY *REPORT*

HISTORIC INVESTMENT IN NORTH ALABAMA VETERANS CEMETERY

ADVA recently received approval for an additional $5.4 million in federal funding for the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery – North Alabama, bringing the total federal investment to $18.9 million. Located on 150 acres near Maysville, the cemetery will provide approximately 150,000 burial sites over its projected 200-year lifespan. This significant investment marks another milestone in expanding burial benefits for North Alabama's veterans and their families.











CEMETERY DIRECTOR RECOGNIZED BY FBI

Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery Director Joe Buschell was recently recognized by the FBI Mobile Division for his exceptional compassion and professionalism during the 2025 burial of U.S. Army PFC Tanya Denise Jackson and her two-year-old daughter, Tatiana Marie Dykes. After nearly three decades of unidentified remains, Buschell ensured the mother and daughter were laid to rest together with dignity and respect. His efforts included arranging a military honor guard ceremony and providing comfort to the family during a difficult time. In appreciation of his dedication, the FBI presented Buschell with a plaque of recognition.

WELCOME *HOME!*







HOME SWEET HOME!

After 16 months away, residents of the Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home officially returned home on September 28, marking a long-awaited and exciting milestone.

Following a roof fire in April 2025, residents were temporarily relocated to Enterprise Health and Rehabilitation Center while extensive repairs were completed. Their return marks a special moment for the veterans, their families, and the entire ADVA community.

A NEW CHAPTER

The restoration process involved extensive repairs to the facility following fire and water damage. Despite the challenges, the project was successfully completed under budget, allowing residents to return to a familiar place they call home.

ADVA extends its gratitude to the Enterprise community, facility staff, families, and everyone who supported residents throughout the restoration process. With residents safely back home, the facility looks forward to welcoming additional veterans in the near future.









SBVA *MEETING*

STATE BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS QUARTERLY MEETING

ADVA hosted its quarterly State Board of Veterans Affairs meeting in early October. Commissioner Jeff Newton and department leadership shared updates on the CSM Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home residents' homecoming, additional federal funding for the North Alabama Veterans Cemetery, Operation We Remember, and recent outreach efforts.









SUPPORTING ALABAMA'S VETERANS

The meeting also featured presentations from Monica Piper, Executive Director of Warrior Freedom Service Dogs, and Jake Procter, Executive Director of the Alabama Military Stability Commission. Warrior Freedom Service Dogs helps veterans facing service-related challenges by pairing them with trained service dogs to provide support, independence, and companionship.

The Alabama Military Stability Commission works to strengthen Alabama's military installations, support military families, and promote the state's military communities. Both organizations highlighted their ongoing efforts to improve the lives of those who serve and have served.

HAPPENING *AROUND ALABAMA*

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

Birmingham, Alabama



Commissioner Jeff Newton recently spoke at the Veterans Mental Health Summit hosted by the Birmingham VA Health Care System. The summit brought together leaders and mental health professionals to discuss ways to improve mental health care and support for veterans across Central Alabama. Commissioner Newton shared ADVA's perspective and emphasized the importance of collaboration in addressing the mental health needs of Alabama's veterans.



BILL NICHOLS SVH REPAVING PARKING LOT

Alexander City, Alabama

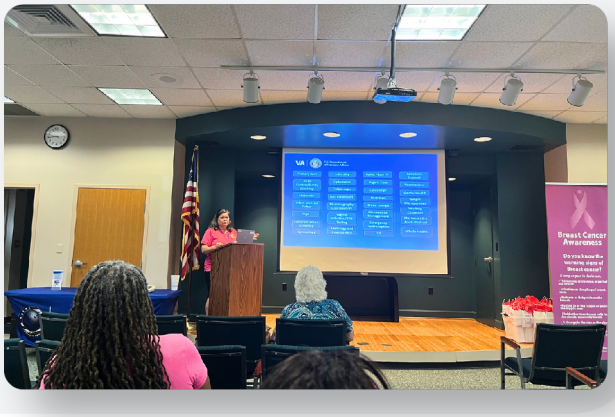


Commissioner Newton stopped by the Bill Nichols State Veterans Home to check on the progress of the parking lot repavement project and spend time with the veterans who call the facility home. During his visit, Commissioner Newton had the opportunity to connect with residents and see firsthand the ongoing improvements being made to the facility.

BRAVEHER – WOMEN VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR

Selma, Alabama

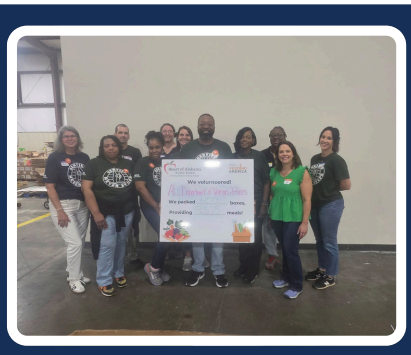
Women Veterans Coordinator Andrea Searor and Director of Field Operations Lynda Jenkins recently attended the BraveHer Women Veterans Resource Fair in Selma. The event provided an opportunity to connect with women veterans, share valuable resources, and highlight the benefits and services available to those who have served. ADVA is proud to serve Alabama's 40,000 women veterans and continue to honor their service.



VETERAN *RESOURCES*

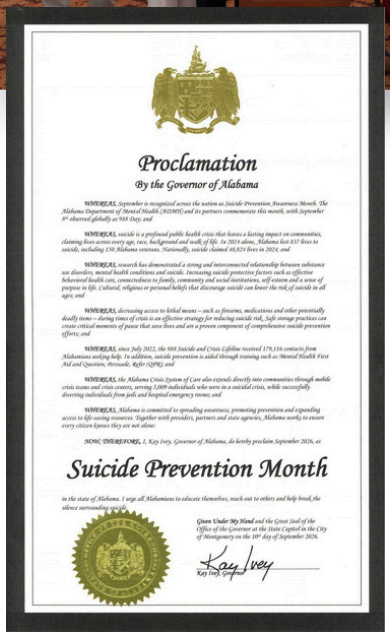
HONORING 9/11 THROUGH SERVICE

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of September 11, members of ADVA headquarters volunteered at the Heart of Alabama Food Bank to give back to the community. The day of service honored the lives lost, remembered the heroes of 9/11, and carried forward the spirit of unity, compassion, and service that brought Americans together 25 years ago.








Proclamation
By the Governor of Alabama

WHEREAS, September is recognized across the nation as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) and its partners commemorate this month, with September 9th observed globally as 988 Day; and

WHEREAS, suicide is a profound public health crisis that leaves a lasting impact on communities, claiming lives across every age, race, background and walk of life. In 2024 alone, Alabama lost 837 lives to suicide, including 150 Alabama veterans. Nationally, suicide claimed 49,824 lives in 2024; and

WHEREAS, research has demonstrated a strong and interconnected relationship between substance use disorders, mental health conditions and suicide. Increasing suicide protective factors such as effective behavioral health care, connectedness to family, community and social institutions, self-esteem and a sense of purpose in life. Cultural, religious or personal beliefs that discourage suicide can lower the risk of suicide in all ages; and

WHEREAS, decreasing access to lethal means – such as firearms, medications and other potentially deadly items – during times of crisis is an effective strategy for reducing suicide risk. Safe storage practices can create critical moments of pause that save lives and are a proven component of comprehensive suicide prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, since July 2022, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline received 178,116 contacts from Alabamians seeking help. In addition, suicide prevention is aided through training such as Mental Health First Aid and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR); and

WHEREAS, the Alabama Crisis System of Care also extends directly into communities through mobile crisis teams and crisis centers, serving 5,009 individuals who were in a suicidal crisis, while successfully diverting individuals from jails and hospital emergency rooms; and

WHEREAS, Alabama is committed to spreading awareness, promoting prevention and expanding access to life-saving resources. Together with providers, partners and state agencies, Alabama works to ensure every citizen knows they are not alone;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kay Ivey, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim September 2026, as

Suicide Prevention Month

in the state of Alabama. I urge all Alabamians to educate themselves, reach out to others and help break the silence surrounding suicide.

Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City of Montgomery on the 1st day of September 2026.

Kay Ivey

RAISING AWARENESS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Veterans Resources Navigator Sissy Louise Moore was recently invited to join the Alabama Department of Mental Health for a proclamation signing by Governor Kay Ivey recognizing September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, highlighting the importance of mental health, recovery, and connecting Alabamians with valuable support and resources.





CONGRATULATIONS!

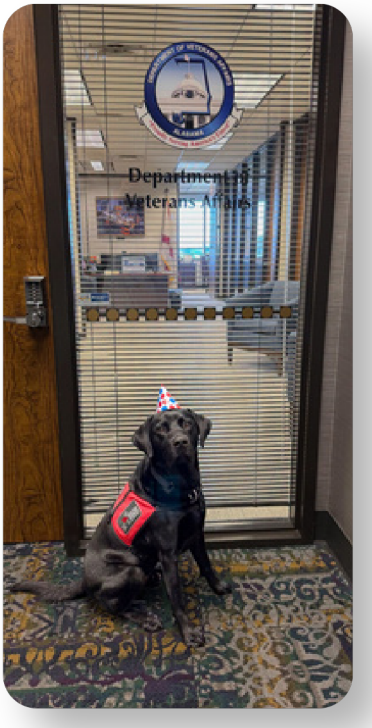
ADVA G.I. Dependent Scholarship Program Director Kayla Kyle recently presented at Auburn University at Montgomery's Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program. The program helps develop leadership and management skills among public sector professionals across Alabama. We are proud of Kayla and grateful for her continued service and dedication to supporting Alabama's veterans and their families.



NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS IN EDUCATION

Alabama's Senate Bill 149 creates a new pathway for eligible veterans to earn a temporary teaching certificate, allowing them to bring their military experience and leadership into Alabama classrooms.

ANNOUNCEMENTS *& MORE*



CELEBRATING 81 YEARS OF ADVA!

On October 1, the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs celebrated 81 years of service to Alabama's veterans and their families. Established in 1945 to assist World War II veterans transitioning to civilian life, ADVA has continued to grow while remaining dedicated to its original mission. Today, the Department proudly provides free assistance, advocacy, and resources to help veterans and their families access the benefits they have earned through service.

STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL THINGS FEDERAL VA WITH NEWS.VA.GOV OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE.

HAPPY 103RD BIRTHDAY!

We want to wish Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home resident Bettie Harris a happy belated birthday!







HONORING A LEGACY

This is why we do what we do. When Ms. Garcia of Texas reached out to ADVA for help obtaining a headstone for her brother, buried at Oakwood Cemetery Annex in Montgomery, our team was honored to help.

With assistance from Darlene Corbin at the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Spanish Fort, a memorial marker was secured through the National Cemetery Administration and placed at his gravesite. ADVA staff later visited the site to pay their respects and shared photos with Ms. Garcia, giving her a connection to her brother's final resting place.

Every veteran deserves to be remembered, and we are grateful for the opportunity to help ensure their service and sacrifice are never forgotten.

LEARN ABOUT MORE UPCOMING EVENTS AND OTHER VETERANS RESOURCES BY SCANNING THE QR CODE

THIS NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO DAVY DAUGHTRY.



Some people leave behind more than memories. They leave a legacy of kindness, compassion, and a lifetime spent making a difference in the lives of others. For the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, Davy Daughtry was one of those people.

Davy devoted 30 years of his life to serving our country in the United States Navy before continuing his service as a Houston County Veterans Service Officer for two decades. To the veterans he helped, he was an advocate and a friend. To his colleagues, he was a mentor, a source of encouragement, and someone who led with a genuine heart for others. His extraordinary dedication was recognized when he became the first recipient of ADVA's Greatest of All-Time (GOAT) in Service to Fellow Veterans Award.

While his accomplishments were many, Davy's greatest impact will always be found in the lives he touched, the veterans he fought for, and the kindness he extended to everyone around him. His absence will be deeply felt, but the example he set will remain a lasting part of ADVA.

Fair winds and following seas, Davy. Thank you for a lifetime of service. You will be dearly missed and never forgotten.