



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, May 21, 2024 – 8:30 a.m. Vets Recover

1200 Springhill Ave – Mobile AL 36604

On the web – <http://www.savc.info> - Facebook – South Alabama Veterans Council

Presidents Corner:



"It has been a "Veteran Month" in April with the opening of Vets Recover Detox & Residential Treatment Facility and other Veteran Events. We all congratulate John Kilpatrick and his team for their efforts over the last 8 years to achieve this great support effort for our Veterans. We wish them good luck and BZ to all.

May is looking to be a great Veteran month also with the Armed Forces Day event at Battleship Memorial Park on 18 May at 1000 hrs., and Memorial Day events on 27 May.. As we move into the busy summer months we cannot forget our Veteran brothers and sisters who need our help and support. Pick a Veteran you may know who needs help and secure and provide that help."

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

Chaplains Corner:

Greetings everyone!

It's Please Forgive Our Hearts:

Read Acts 8:22

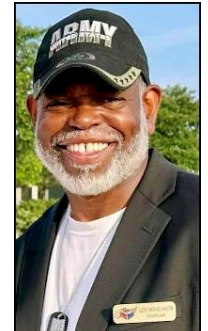
"Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven."

The Bible says as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Sometimes we have bad thoughts in our hearts and we need to repent and pray to God. We must ask Him to forgive our hearts because our hearts are what God looks at the most. The Bible says out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Remember the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it but the Lord. Let's make sure our hearts are right. The Bible says to guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life.

In the Name of Jesus Amen!

In the Name of Jesus' Amen!

Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain SAVC



Major General Jerome Gary Cooper, USMC (Ret)

Major General Jerome Gary Cooper, USMC (Retired), was called to be with the Lord on the morning of April 27, 2024. Gary was born on October 2, 1936, in Lafayette, Louisiana to Algernon J. Cooper, Sr. and Gladys Mouton Cooper, and was the oldest of six children.

Gen Cooper received his B.S. degree in Finance from the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps upon graduation in June 1958. Following graduation from The Basic School, he initially reported for duty with the 1st Marine Brigade in Hawaii. General Cooper served on active duty for 12 years, commanding a number of units, including the Marine Detachment aboard the Guided Missile Cruiser Chicago. In 1967, he became the first black officer in the Marine Corps to lead an infantry company into combat which is noted in the historical calendar of the Corps.

In Vietnam, General Cooper earned a number of decorations for heroism including the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts for wounds received in ground action, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry three times. His other military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

He joined the Individual Ready Reserve in January 1970. As a reservist, he has commanded the 13th Force Reconnaissance Company in Mobile, the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines, 4th Marine Division, and a number of other mobilization assignments including Commanding General, Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, N.C. In 1988, he was promoted to Major General and returned to active duty as Director of Personnel, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps. He retired from the Corps in 1996.

In 1974, General Cooper was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives. He was one of the first African-Americans since the Reconstruction era elected to the Legislature from South Alabama. He was reelected in 1978 but resigned to serve in the Governor's Cabinet as Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources. In this Cabinet position, Commissioner Cooper managed a staff of over 4,000 and the largest agency budget in the State of Alabama.

President Bush, in 1989 appointed, and the U.S. Senate confirmed Mr. Cooper as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations and the Environment. He participated in the planning of Operation Desert Storm. He served throughout the Bush Administration.

In 1994, President Clinton selected Gen Cooper to serve as the United States Ambassador to Jamaica.

He was selected Patriot of the Year by the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission and has been on a wide range of boards including, locally, the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission, and Veterans Memorial Recovery Team. Mr. Cooper faithfully served as Chairman of CNB Bancorp, Inc. until his retirement in 2022. In addition, he served on numerous other boards including, The Community Foundation of South Alabama, the American Friends of

Jamaica, U.S. Steel, Inc., PNC Financial Services, GenCorp., Protective Life Insurance Co., and the Air University Board of Visitors. He was very proud to serve as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Commonwealth National Bank, the first minority-owned National Bank in Alabama.

He is a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, 100 Black Men of Greater Mobile, the Montford Point Marine Association, the NAACP - Unit 5044, and the Marine Corps League. In addition, he was active in numerous other community organizations, especially those serving youth such as the Hope Boxing Academy.





MOBILE, Ala. -- 18 men and women took an oath on Saturday morning to protect and serve our country.

An enlistment ceremony was held inside the Aircraft Pavilion at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park.

Those taking the oath of enlistment will be heading into the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force.

Colonel Patrick Downing administered the oath. He says this is an important step for a new generation to protect our country.

The next step for these newly enlisted is to prepare for Basic Training with their respective branches. [18 patriots pledge to serve nation at USS Alabama enlistment ceremony in Mobile \(mynbc15.com\)](https://www.mynbc15.com)


Everyone who joins the military has one thing in common: they must swear in by repeating the military oath of enlistment or military oath of office.

The oath of enlistment is something that every service member must promise and adhere to for their entire military career. If you are entering as an officer you'll instead take the military oath of office.

From the oath, you can see that you will be defending the Constitution -- not a person. Discipline and accepting orders is sworn to. Finally, you vow to face the UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice) should any disputes arise.

INTO THE WORLD

GO FORTH WITH NO GREAT SKILL OR WEALTH,
WITH LOVE, FAITH, AND YOUR GOOD HEALTH.
A WORLD OF VIOLENCE, POVERTY, & DISEASE,
IS WAITING FOR YOU--IT IS GOD YOU PLEASE.


Joe McCormack
Veteran Author

The Oath of Enlistment (for enlisted):

"I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

The Oath of Office (for officers):

"I, _____ (SSAN), having been appointed an officer in the _____ (Military Branch) of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; So help me God."



Interested in Joining the Military?

Learn about the benefits of serving your country, paying for school, military career paths and more: [sign up now](#) and hear from a recruiter near you.

Want to Learn More About Military Life?

Whether you're thinking of joining the military, looking for fitness and basic training tips, or keeping up with military life and benefits, Military.com has you covered. [Subscribe to Military.com](#) to have military news, updates, and resources delivered directly to your inbox.

THE CHOSEN

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SELECTED FEW,
OPENS YOUR EYES TO WHAT YOU CAN DO.
MOTIVATION--HARD WORK--CONFIDENCE TOO,
MAKE POSSIBLE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.


Joe McCormack
Veteran Author



South Alabama Veterans Council VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

Elbert Wingfield, USMC, Vietnam Veteran

Elbert enlisted in the Marine Corps when he was 18 because President Kennedy said, "Think not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." That stuck with him. Kennedy was killed and President Johnson said he needed men to go to war.

He served in Vietnam for 13 months. During that time, he served with the 27th Marine Combat Action Group in Vietnam. For his service, Elbert was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Vietnam Service Ribbon with 3 Bronze Stars, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

"War is hell. Freedom is not free. Vietnam was one of the toughest wars you could fight and when we came home no one cared about us. They called us baby killers. That has changed and most people are thankful they didn't have to go to that war to fight for their freedom." Wingfield recalled.

Elbert is a founder and member of the Black Military Workers of America, a founder and member of Chapter 33 of the Montford Point Marines, and is also a member of the South Alabama Veterans Council. Among Wingfield's support of the Mobile Child Advocacy Center and as a Board Member of the Mobile Cerebral Palsy Association. In 2006 he received the Small Businessman of the Year for his business, Saucy-Q-Bar-B-Cue. Elbert is well known for his support of veterans and in particular the SAVC.

After the war, he planned to get married, buy a house, and settle down in Mobile. It was also hard to find a job in Mobile, his mother lived in Philadelphia, PA so they moved there, married, and started a family. He got a job as a shoe salesman, became the top salesman and was promoted to the manager of the department and then the store. Then they told him he had made it as high as he could go. He learned how to cook from his grandmother and on weekends in Philadelphia, he cooked ribs, chicken, fish, and potato salad and everyone came over.

He packed up his family and moved back to Mobile and his wife, Jacquelyn, got her nursing degree. He started selling barbeque sauce at the flea market in

1998. The name Saucy Q Bar B Que came from the song 'Suzy Q.'

Saucy Q BBQ Restaurant has been the meeting place of the South Alabama Veterans Council for several years. The restaurant is owned by barbecue aficionado and Alabama native Elbert Wingfield, who says his family—Jacquelyn, Jarret, and Darnell—had three things in mind when starting the business: good service, a good attitude, and good food.

Elbert is thankful for the support of Mobile and believes in giving back to the community and customers. He served on a few non-profit boards and learned so much from working with the Child Advocacy Center. Over 50 years later, he still has nightmares about Vietnam. "God and my family make each day worth living." -Elbert Wingfield



Saucy Q Bar B Que

1111 Government St., Mobile, AL

GO FORTH IN FAITH

BE MORE DRAWN THAN PERSISTENTLY DRIVEN,
DO GOOD WITH WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN.
LIVE AS A STRANGER IN A FOREIGN LAND,
SERVE OTHERS NEAR OR JUST ACROSS TOWN.

SEE JESUS IN ALL THAT YOU DO,
LIVE WITH HIM INSIDE OF YOU.
HE SUSTAINS YOU BY YOUR FAITH AND PRAYERS,
BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR TALENTS, TIME & CARES.

Joe McCormack
Joe McCormack
Veteran Author



VETS RECOVER

TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE OF CARE

SAVC MAY 21 MEETING
VETS RECOVER will host the SAVC Meeting
May 21 At their new Detox Facility
1200 Springhill Ave, Mobile, AL 36604



Our May Guest Speaker is **Mr. Shaun Shenk** the Chief of Community and Public Affairs for the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System. He served nearly nine years in the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Air Force Reserves from 2003-2012 as a Videographer/Public Affairs Specialist. During that time, he received the Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Air Force Achievement Medal. **Eric Reynolds**, FOX10 News Anchor, and Men's Health Advocate will also speak at the meeting.



Julius Powell – Lou Lartigue, President SAVC

Julius Powell was awarded for his invaluable volunteer service and contributions to the [South Alabama Veterans Council](#). We are so proud of you for your selfless dedication, hard work, and generosity you show our veterans. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and we are so proud to have you as a part of our community. Thank you, Julius, for your service and for inspiring us all with your dedication and passion.



License Commissioner Col Nick Matranga, USMC (Ret)
Lou Lartigue, USA (Ret) President – SAVC

April Guest Speaker License Commissioner Col Nick Matranga, USMC (Ret) provided breakfast and shared his experience in the US Marines.



Lou Lartigue, President SAVC, Maj Deborah Siler USA, JROTC
Major Siler accepted the SAVC Grant for the JROTC STEM program

WALL TOURS MAY 9-12, 2024
OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY

THE WALL THAT HEALS OPENING CEREMONY
BALDWIN COUNTY COLISEUM
19477 FAIRGROUND RD ROBERTSDALE, AL 36567

MAY 9TH, 2024
PLEASE JOIN US FOR
OPENING CEREMONY @ 8AM

City of Robertsdale ▶ The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall
April 11 at 1:15 PM

ARMED FORCES DAY CEREMONY

ARMED FORCES DAY CEREMONY
May 18, 2024
10:00 A.M.
9-11 Memorial
USS Alabama Battleship
Memorial Park
2703 Battleship Pkwy, Mobile, AL 36602

May 1, 2024 – Silver Star Banner Day – Per Congressional resolution, it is an “Official Day to honor wounded, ill, and injured Veterans”.

May 10, 2024 – Military Spouse Appreciation Day – This date recognizes the service and sacrifices of military spouses.

May 13, 2024 – Children of Fallen Patriots Day – A day to honor the children left behind by the brave men and women who gave their lives while defending our freedom.

May 18, 2024 – Armed Forces Day – Observed on the third Saturday every May, this is a day dedicated to paying tribute to men and women currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

May 27, 2024 – Memorial Day – A solemn occasion to honor the men and women who died while serving in the military. Learn more about Memorial Day here.



OUR MISSION

TO BUILD AND DONATE SPECIALLY ADAPTED CUSTOM HOMES NATIONWIDE FOR SEVERELY INJURED POST-9/11 VETERANS, TO ENABLE THEM TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED ON MARCH 16, 2024

Local Veteran with disabilities receiving custom-built home

Johnny Morris II
Marine, Staff Sergeant
Elberta, AL

During his third deployment, U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Johnny Morris sustained severe damage to both of his legs, including the traumatic amputation of his left foot, after he stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED).

On Saturday, April 1, the national nonprofit organization, Homes For Our Troops, will kick off the building of a specially adapted home for Morris and his family. The community kickoff event signifies the start of the build and will introduce Morris to the community. The public is welcome to attend.

[Veteran Home Recipients - Listing of the Heroes we serve at HFOT \(hfotusa.org\)](https://www.hfotusa.org)

16th Annual Memorial Day Flag Relay



Monday, May 27, 2024

Volunteers Needed

- Flag Carriers (run or jog -- 1 mile leg) with a U.S. Flag or Military Services Flag
- Section Captains (organize participants)
- Safety Monitors (lead & follow vehicles)

3 Central Gulf Coast Region Routes

- From West Mobile to the USS Alabama
- From Loxley to Robertsdale
- From Robertsdale to "AL. Point"/Orange Bch.

All runners must be medically fit to enter this event and run entirely at their own risk.

Starters' Ceremony: 0645-0700am, then relay

West Mobile's Starter Site: 9055 Tanner Williams Rd.
(Park next to Pierce Creek Cemetery)

For more information or **to register for participation**, contact a local Resource Partner at (251) 649-1430/cell, or like the Facebook pages: Memorial Day Flag Relay Mobile, AL **OR** Baldwin Co.

NO FUNDS are solicited or accepted in support of this event!

EVENT HOSTS: Cross the Divide, Veterans Recovery Resources, and the South Alabama Chapter of Military Officers Association of America (Donate Online!)

Baldwin County Memorial Day Flag Relay Run

We are 4 weeks away from the 16th annual Memorial Day Flag Relay Run! The relay is set to take place on Monday, May 27 @ 7:00 AM.

Two runs will start simultaneously in two locations (this is to accomplish the route quicker and earlier in the morning). Route 1 will begin in Gulf Shores where HWY 59 intersects HWY 182 @ 7:00 AM and travel North bound. Route 1 will finish in Foley @ 9:20 AM where Beach Express intersects HWY 59. Route 2 will begin in Foley where Beach Express intersects HWY 59 @ 7:00 AM and travel North bound. Route 2 will finish @ 9:20 AM at Loxley Municipal Park.

The relay totals roughly 28 miles from Gulf Shores to Loxley. Groups of 3 runners will carry the American Flag and the Armed forces flag, handing the flags off every 3 miles to the next group of staged runners. Memorial signs featuring fallen heroes will mark the start points for each group of runners.

If you (or someone you know) is interested in running a 3 mile leg, please let us know! Let's rally as a community and "remember to remember" this Memorial Day!

Tyler York
251-222-5270
Elizabeth York
251-533-1323

US. Coast Guard Sector Mobile

Did you know that Mobile has one of the fastest growing container terminals in the nation? They move approximately 500,000 TEUs annually and with that much cargo comes a lot of responsibility!

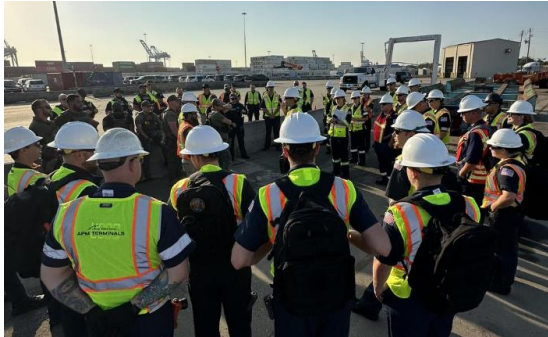
Although we regularly inspect containers as they enter our ports for safety and security, conducting a Multi-Agency Strike Force Operation (MASFO) helps us take things to another level!

This year we coordinated with several other agencies including Mobile County Sheriff's Office, ALEA, AL State Patrol, DOT, Customs and Border Patrol, TSA, National Cargo Bureau, and CGIS. We were also joined by members from other CG units whose assistance was greatly appreciated.

These rigorous inspections on containerized cargo, across all modes of transportation, highlight the continuous dedication of the U.S. Coast Guard and its partners to maintain top-notch safety, security, and environmental standards at the Port of Mobile.

Extra credit if you can guess how many containers we inspected! 🇺🇸

[#portofmobile](#) [#uscg](#) [#safetyfirst](#) [#mobileal](#)



American Legion Riders Post 88 Presented an American Flag to Tom Claxton USMC

Thank you to American Legion Rider's Post 88 for honoring Tom Claxton with the American Flag and flagpole. Oohrah!!!



Veterans Memorial Recovery Team@Historic Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery

What an amazing group of Veterans at Uniti Fiber "Proud to Serve". Thank you for your service 🇺🇸❤️

A week of caring, IB-CAS students from Murphy, USGG, Montford Point Marines Association - Chapter 33, and Vets Recover and Uniti "Proud to Serve", made an awesome impact at Historic Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery,



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

**South Alabama Veterans Council
Minutes April 16, 2024 Meeting
Nick Matranga, License Commissioner provided
breakfast**

1. Welcome & Call to Order, President Lou Lartigue Lartigue called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. -36 in attendance - Location Saucy Q BBQ
2. Opening Prayer & Pledge. Rev. Michael Austin & Jim Jeffries
3. Introduction of New Attendees, Lou Lartigue, Lt Rogers, ATC, Georgianna Catrino, Synergy Health Care, Alona Thompson, GCVHC Therapist
4. Newsletter & Minutes, Fran Barber-Bruyn, Secretary Minutes for the March meeting was mailed in the newsletter. Nine snail mail newsletters and 550 emails. Minutes approved as read.
5. Treasury & Grant Presentations, Tom Schwarz, , March hat = \$109.00. Grant given to JROTC-STEM \$500.00, accepted by Maj. Deborah Siler gave a brief overview of the STEM program. \$78.00 collected in April hat.
6. Pete Riehm: Memorial Day Activities
7. Current Veterans Activities & AL News Jim Jeffries, reported on the American Legion Scholarships, Girls State and Boys State at Troy University.
8. AL Veterans Cemetery Foundation, Pat Downing, President BOD – Internments 3997, Reported on the expansion dedication and consecration ceremony on 3/26/24,
9. USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, Pat Downing – Stevie’s Kitchen now open, Oath of Enlistment on April 20, also MOPAR car show April 20., Dixie Division Military vehicle show. 2024-2025 Crewmates Contest. The Teak deck project was completed. Medal of Honor Pavilion.
10. Alabama Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Admiral Kent Davis reported Col Pat Downing received the

Distinguished Service Medal, on April 2, State House Military Appreciation Day. As reported on Navy Week, Bennie G Adkins Veterans Home 90% complete and is opening in the fall of 2024. Reported don PACT act, Veterans Access to Care Bill drafted by Brown and Jones.

John Kilpatrick invited everyone to the Grand Opening of Vets Recover Detox and Residential Facility.

RADM Endel Lee reported on the Memorial Day Flag Relay.

11. Veteran Memorial Recovery Team, Fran Barber-Bruyn
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: COL Nick Matranga, USMCR (Ret) License Commissioner. Lou presented the Col with an SAVC Challenge Coin

Lou presented a plaque to Julius Powell for his service to the community and support of SAVC.

14. Topics of Interest & Upcoming Events, Lou Lartigue

DAV – John Joe Dec reported on Auxiliary Veterans Town Hall May 22,

Mighty Warrior Foundation: J.D. Drinkard reported on upcoming wheelchair games and other events.

Vet to Vet Café at Spring Hill Golf Course Monday, May

22. Over 60 veterans pinned for Welcome Home in March.

• **Upcoming Events:**

1. 17 April--VR Grand Opening
2. 20 April—9th Open Enlistment, Battleship A/C Pavilion, 1000 hrs.
3. 9-12 May—Vietnam Memorial Wall, Baldwin County Coliseum, Robertsdale
4. 18 May – AFD Ceremony, BMP, 1000 hrs., @ Fallen Heros Memorial.
5. 27 May—Memorial Day Ceremonies, 0700 BMP flag lowering, 0830 National Cemetery, VA St.
6. 27 May—16th Annual Memorial Day Flag Relay, 0645 Ceremony-Relay 1 mi. leg 9055 Tanner Williams Rd./Pierce Creek Cemetery, Volunteers needed.

15. Good of the Order/Questions & Comments, Lou Lartigue

16. Close – Fran Barber-Bruyn, Secretary