



# 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 Atkeison, Spiritus Emeritus SAVC*

**NEXT SAVC MEETING - Tuesday- January 16, 2023 – 8:30 a.m. - Saucy Q**

1111 Government St–Mobile AL

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

### Presidents Corner:



*"We hope you and yours had a happy and fulfilling Holiday Season.*

*Now, it is time to turn our sights to 2024. We are blessed with the opportunity to move forward to a productive and rewarding year; if we just put our best foot forward and contribute to our family, community, and fellow Veterans. I encourage everyone to get involved and work with us to improve the lives of our Veterans. You can be part of this effort by getting more involved in the activities of your VSOs, getting involved within your community to assist your fellow citizens, and help our SAVC execute our many activities to support our Veterans.*

*We look forward to working with you and our Veterans to make 2024"*

*"The Year of Our Veterans."*

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



### Chaplains Corner: Happy New Year!

*Read Luke 5:38*

*"But New wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved."*

*A certain satisfaction exists in closing the book on the old year and opening up a new book, on a new year. Our ever-creating God has extraordinary plans for each of us in the upcoming 365 days. Jesus once shared a parable with the religious leaders. He pointed out that no one pours new wine into old wineskins; the wine would spill out and be ruined. New wine requires new wineskins. Wineskins were goatskins sewn around the edges to create a watertight vessel. As new wine ferments, it emits gasses that cause the wineskin to expand. The old rigid wineskin could not withstand this process and would burst. There will be new things coming up this year that will stretch and expand us. We will need a new attitude, and new patience to deal with them, so we don't burst. Jesus' new teaching was so different from their old ways of thinking that it required a change of hearts and transformed minds. The new wine represents the Holy Ghost, it could not be contained in their ways of thinking, and living. As we anticipate what God has for us in 2024, let's prepare our hearts, minds, and souls and open ourselves up to His new possibilities. Listen for the truth that HE will whisper. Get ready, God has great aspirations for us in 2024. A brand new 365 days, a new 52 weeks, and a new 12 months.*

*In Jesus' Name Amen!*

*Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin  
Chaplain, SAVC*



## The Year In Review

Twenty-twenty-three is in the books, and SAVC attendance has steadily grown averaging forty-two attendees at the monthly meetings held at Saucy Q. With some thought and planning, different individuals, companies, and organizations have stepped up to cover the cost of breakfast each month.

We have had some very interesting guests, and with SAVC being a bipartisan council and twenty-twenty-four being a local election year, we have offered the podium to several candidates running for various offices.

The SAVC Grant Program has been blessed with donations that have been awarded to over 30 VSOs and Civic Organizations that are supporting our local Veterans.

### The following is a list of VSOs and amounts we discussed.

- Dec 2022:** BMP-ship deck; Ring of Hope
- Jan 2023:** QOV Mobile; QOV Baldwin Co
- Feb 2023:** CG CPO Mobile
- Mar 2023:** Out of the Deep; Team River Runner; Caring Hands
- Apr 2023:** H2o; PGR; Porch Ministries
- May 2023:** Blue Star Salute; Service Dog AL
- Jun 2023:** Infinite Opportunity; John 9:3
- Jul 2023:** Forging a Difference; Dixie Rear Detch; Love Me Always Ministries
- Aug 2023:** Fight Oar Die; Veterans Foster Senior Games
- Sept 2023:** V.E.T.S. Hope that helps
- Nov 2023:** Ring of Hope

USCG-ATC was the host of the February meeting, taking 40 individuals on a personal tour of the Coast Guard Training Center.

SAVC was honored to have Chief Paul O. Prine speak. Prine has been the City of Mobile Chief of Police since November 12, 2021.

Twenty-twenty-four will be another exciting year for Vets Recovery: On Monday, May 15, 2023 Veterans Recovery Resources announced that it will be rebranded as Vets Recover - Transforming the Culture of Care. We will continue to offer the same expert level of care for mental and physical health.

## We accomplished a lot:

Planned and executed events such as Memorial and Veterans Day activities, Armed Forces Day & Blue Star Salute, POW/MIA Candlelight Ceremony, Flags of Glory, conducted 11 monthly meetings and newsletters to over 550 members, participated in Veterans Seminars and meetings, etc.

We are looking forward to 2024 planning and participating in all the Veteran Annual Events, and bringing our Veteran's information and news to help improve their day-to-day life.

In August We heard from Judge Windom on the Veteran Treatment Court. We attended the initial opening of the court on 25 August and it was a total success.

We also heard from Chief Jason Lewis about his career in the Navy and his local community support. During the meeting, we heard from Elbert Winfield, Veteran and owner of Saucy Q's, and we temporarily resolved our breakfast situation. Charlie Wilson, Medicare Specialist, and two other organizations offered to provide breakfast in September, October, and November--thanks to all.

We said goodbye to Captain Chris Hulser and welcomed USCG – ATC Mobile, AL Commanding Officer: Captain Scott E. Lugo.

Captain Lugo assumed command of the Coast Guard's Aviation Training Center in April 2023 and is responsible for all aspects of Coast Guard pilot and aircrew training, including the standardization for 26 air stations and 43 flight deck-equipped Coast Guard cutters, the development of Coast Guard aviation capabilities, and an operational element that provides disaster surge response and 24/7 a fixed-wing operational response and for America's Gulf Coast.

We supported the Traveling Vietnam Wall on 12-15 October at Serenity Funeral Home.

Twenty-three was a good year for SAVC and we have covered just a few of the things we have accomplished this past year.

Remember to do that Veteran Buddy Check during these cold winter months

Twenty-twenty-four:

### *"The Year of Our Veterans"*



**It is with extreme sadness  
we share news of the passing recently of  
Veteran Leaders from our area**



**Sy Lichtenfeld 's Memorial Service  
January 14, 2024**

A veteran and POW from WWII, he went on to graduate from Purdue University. He was an active member of the American EX-POWS, and South Alabama Veterans Council, among many other veteran organizations.



COL Bob Barefield enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1968 as an 11B Infantryman and retired at the rank of Colonel after 30 years of service. He also served in Vietnam. His other assignments included the invasion of Cambodia with the 1st Cavalry Division, commanding the 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne in Panama leading up to Operation Just Cause and last commanding the 5th Brigade, U.S. Army Cadet Command.

Barefield is a highly decorated veteran holding the Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, Army Aviation Wings, Master Parachutist Badge and Pathfinder Badge, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with "V," Bronze Star Medal (third award), Purple Heart (fifth award), Meritorious Service Medal (seventh award), Air Medal and Army Commendation Medal with "V."

'We' lost a great American Patriot, highly distinguished and decorated military officer, and passionate servant to veterans and their families.

**A CHANGE OF LIFE**

THE AWARD OF THE PURPLE HEART,  
REQUIRES ADAPTING A NEW START.  
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO BE,  
USING BEST OF WHAT YOU USED TO BE.

REQUIRES COURAGE, HOPE, FAITH AND DETERMINATION  
TO OVERCOME THE FEARS OF INVISIBLE INFESTATIONS.  
COURAGE ACCEPTS HELP - HOPE ACHIEVES RECOVERY,  
FAITH IS STRENGTH TO STAY ON ROAD OF DISCOVERY.-

*Joe Mc Cormack*  
JOMAC - Poetry in Action



Edward Philip Evans, US Army Retired 95, born May 14, 1928, in Seminole, AL to Edward B. & Pauline Mary Burke Evans, passed away December 26, 2023.

He joined the United States Army in September 1948 retiring as a 1st Lt. USAR, Command Sargent Major on October 1968. He is a Korean War survivor. He served 3 tours of duty in Korea. He received the Bronze Star Medal with V Device for Valor Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Occupation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Rok War Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal throughout his service to our country.

He was a member of the DAV Chapter 45, Purple Heart Chapter 2206, VFW Chapter 5658, American Legion Post 99. He had the honor of being selected as the 2021 Alabama Purple Heart Patriot of the Year with a seven-day trip to New York, Purple Heart Museum, Ground Zero, and West Point. He had the honor of making all the municipalities in Baldwin County into Purple Heart Communities. He was a Board Member for the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spanish Fort, AL



Marvin Roland Carpenter, age 97, was born November 21, 1926, in Kiln, Mississippi, and departed this life on December 24, 2023. At the early age of 16, Marvin joined the US Coast Guard during World War II and participated in four invasions, including D-Day at Normandy. After the war, he continued to serve in the Coast Guard until he retired as a Master Chief with 26 years of service. Upon retirement, Marvin and his wife Carolyn, son, and three daughters settled in Mobile, Alabama, where he would live for the rest of his life.

## REMEMBER THE BULGE - 79th ANNIVERSARY

The Battle of the Bulge, also known as the Ardennes Offensive, was the last major German offensive campaign on the Western Front during World War II. The battle lasted for five weeks from 16 December 1944 to 28 January 1945, toward the end of the war in Europe.

### What happened at the Battle of Bulge?

The Battle of the Bulge marked the last German offense on the Western Front. The catastrophic losses on the German side prevented Germany from resisting the advance of Allied forces following the Normandy Invasion. Less than four months after the end of the Battle of the Bulge, Germany surrendered to Allied forces.

### How many Americans died in the Battle of the Bulge?

19,000 men

Battle of the Bulge Memorial

Soldiers fought in brutal winter conditions, and the U.S. Army lost approximately 19,000 men (and suffered some 75,000 total casualties) in what became the United States' deadliest single World War II battle.

[Battle of the Bulge | The National WWII Museum | New Orleans \(nationalww2museum.org\)](#)



Texting the Veterans Crisis Line when you need support is normal.

Text 838255

 Veterans Crisis Line  
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

Free, 24/7, confidential support is a click away. The Veterans Crisis Line can help even if you're not enrolled in VA benefits or health care.

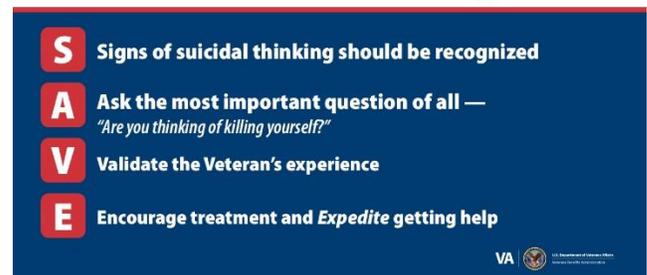
The holiday season can be a challenging time of year for many. [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs S.A.V.E. Training](#) can help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a Veteran who is in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts. The acronym S.A.V.E. helps you remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention.

Learn more:

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/.../VA\\_SAVE\\_Training.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/.../VA_SAVE_Training.pdf)

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Dial 988 then Press 1. 📞

## VA S.A.V.E. Training



**S** Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized

**A** Ask the most important question of all —  
"Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

**V** Validate the Veteran's experience

**E** Encourage treatment and Expedite getting help

VA 

If you served in the Vietnam, Gulf War, or Post-9/11 eras, you may be eligible for expanded [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) benefits and services due to toxic exposures.

Learn more and file a claim for your PACT Act-related benefits now: <https://www.va.gov/res.../the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>

- If you are approaching the last 180 days of your military service and were exposed to hazardous materials while serving, don't wait to file a claim.

Learn more: <https://www.va.gov/.../when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim/>



File a claim for PACT Act-related benefits now

GET THE BENEFITS AND CARE YOU'VE EARNED

VA  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Benefits Administration

## Amid recruiting woes, active-duty end strength to drop again in 2024

The smallest U.S. military force in more than 80 years is about to get even smaller.

Under end strength levels outlined in the annual defense authorization bill passed by the Senate Wednesday evening and expected to be passed by the House on Thursday, the total number of active-duty troops in the armed forces will drop to 1,284,500 in fiscal 2024. That's down nearly 64,000 personnel in the last three years and the smallest total for America's military since 1940, before the United States' entry into World War II.

[Amid recruiting woes, active duty end strength to drop again in 2024 \(militarytimes.com\)](#)

## What are the new VA benefits for 2024?

Disabled veterans with a current VA disability rating of 10% or higher will receive a 3.2% increase in their VA disability pay rate for calendar year 2024. For example, a veteran rated 100% with no dependents receiving \$3,621.95 in 2023 will begin receiving \$3,737.85 in 2024 due to the 3.2% COLA increase.

## CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING

### Veterans Service Offices

The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) has veterans service offices located in 60 counties throughout the State of Alabama. The primary function of the ADVA service offices is to assist veterans, their dependents, and survivors in the application and processing of claims for benefits and entitlements available from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the benefits provided for veterans by law from the State of Alabama earned by honorable service in the armed forces of the United States.

Services include processing compensation and pension applications; appealing VA decisions; filing for survivors' death benefits; applying for aid and attendance and housebound benefits; certification of claim documents; requesting for military service records; upgrading military discharges; applying for special veteran license plates.

ADVA veterans service officers are accredited to perform claims actions by nationally chartered veterans service organizations including the American Legion, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Fleet Reserve Association, and Blinded Veterans Association.

## Links

To find your nearest Veterans Service Office visit the [Veterans Service Office Locator Page](#) for contact options.

## ALABAMA VETERAN NEWSLETTER Get Your Copy Today!

The Alabama Veteran Quarterly Newsletter is now available for download. For your convenience, the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs has provided a PDF version of their newsletters below. You can download, view, and print this year's Alabama Veteran Newsletter issues by clicking the thumbnail. You can view previous issues by clicking the link at the bottom of the page.

[ALABAMA VETERAN NEWSLETTER – Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

Adobe Acrobat Reader is required to view or print PDF files and is available **FREE**. To download Acrobat Reader, visit the [Adobe Reader](#) download site.

## HONOR GUARD RECOGNITION PROGRAM



The Alabama Honor Guard

Recognition Program recognizes Alabama residents who perform military honors across the state. Applicants must have completed at least 25 honor guard/color guard-related ceremonies, such as:

- Folding/Presenting the Flag
- Playing of Taps
- Rifle Detail
- Flag-bearing Color Guard
- Pallbearers

Applicants must be nominated for the award by their parent organization. For more information, contact the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs headquarters at (334) 242-5077.

## Links

[Application](#) Download the application for the Honor Guard Recognition Program.



JAN 11, 2024 AT 9 AM – JAN 14, 2024 AT 1 PM

## 2024 American Legion Family Mid-Winter Conference

Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel

### 2024 Gulf Coast Military Mardi Gras Ball

**Saturday, January 27, 2024**

Whether you're a service member, a supporter, or simply looking for an incredible night out, the Gulf Coast Military Mardi Gras Ball is an event not to be missed. Mark your calendars and get ready to create memories that will last a lifetime.

Follow the link for more details.

[Gulf Coast Military Mardi Gras Ball](#)

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### **"Whatever our differences now we were there then"**

To understand a Military Veteran, you must know:

- \* We left home as teenagers or in our early twenties for an unknown adventure.
- \* We loved our country enough to defend it and protect it with our own lives.
- \* We said goodbye to friends and family and everything we knew.
- \* We learned the basics and then we scattered in the wind to the far corners of the Earth.
- \* We found new friends and new family.
- \* We became brothers and sisters regardless of color, race or creed.
- \* We had plenty of good times, and plenty of bad times.
- \* We didn't get enough sleep.
- \* We smoked and drank too much.
- \* We picked up both good and bad habits.
- \* We worked hard and played harder.
- \* We didn't earn a great wage.
- \* We experienced the happiness of mail call and the sadness of missing important events.
- \* We didn't know when, or even if, we were ever going to see home again.

- \* We grew up fast, and yet somehow, we never grew up at all.
- \* We fought for our freedom, as well as the freedom of others.
- \* Some of us saw actual combat, and some of us didn't.
- \* Some of us saw the world, and some of us didn't.
- \* Some of us dealt with physical warfare, and most of us dealt with psychological warfare.
- \* We have seen and experienced and dealt with things that we can't fully describe or explain, as not all of our sacrifices were physical.
- \* We participated in time-honored ceremonies and rituals with each other, strengthening our bonds and camaraderie.
- \* We counted on each other to get our job done and sometimes to survive it at all.
- \* We have dealt with victory and tragedy.
- \* We have celebrated and mourned.
- \* We lost a few along the way.
- \* When our adventure was over, some of us went back home, some of us started somewhere new and some of us never came home at all.
- \* We have told amazing and hilarious stories of our exploits and adventures.
- \* We share an unspoken bond with each other, that most people don't experience, and few will understand.
- \* We speak highly of our own branch of service, and poke fun at the other branches.
- \* We know however, that, if needed, we will be there for our brothers and sisters and stand together as one, in a heartbeat.
- \* Being a Veteran is something that had to be earned, and it can never be taken away.
- \* It has no monetary value, but at the same time it is a priceless gift.
- \* Once a serviceman always a serviceman.

### **January**

- 1/16 Desert Storm (Persian Gulf) Began (1991)
- 1/27 Vietnam War Cease Fire (1973)
- 1/31 Panama Campaign Ended (1990)



**The Fifth And Final Project Stage Teakdecking Systems Of USS ALABAMA's Teak Deck Replacement Project Starts In January 2024.**

The onset of the new year at USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park marks a significant milestone: the completion of the teak deck replacement project. In a monumental effort to preserve the rich history of the WWII battleship, USS

ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park is on the brink of completing its three-year, \$8.5 million teak deck replacement project. The decision to replace the over-80-year-old teak deck was not taken lightly. The balance between maintaining historical authenticity and safeguarding the ship's future was carefully considered. The park's Deputy Executive Director, LTC Ebb Counts, (USA Ret.) stated, "When we started on this deck replacement project, in October 2021, there were a couple of things that came as a surprise to me. First and foremost, the level of public interest and support has been phenomenal. Folks have followed the progress of the project on social media and financially supported the project through donations and the purchase of items crafted from the salvageable teak planks."

In June of 2023, teak sales began. Since then, USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park's gift shop has sold many items including coasters, plaques, pens, unfinished planks and more all made from the original teak deck of the USS ALABAMA.

Proceeds from the teak sales go toward the funding of the project.

The USS ALABAMA Battleship Commission anticipates that the project will be completed earlier than projected. Park Executive Director MG Janet Cobb, USA (Ret.), notes that the project's meaning extends beyond the physical aspects of the USS ALABAMA. "The work reflects the preservation of WWII naval history. It is a tribute to more than 6,000 crewmen who served aboard the "Mighty A" during her years of service."

The fifth and final project stage starts in January 2024.

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 MEMORIALIZING MEMORIES® 

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 (251) 661-1333



In partnership with the SAVC and Scuttlebutt Radio Network, we are creating a Veteran Owned Business List. Please register if you are a VOB or an organization helping veterans/military and share with other Veteran business owners. This effort aims to provide support to and increase awareness of Veteran Owned Businesses.



**Veterans Recovery Resources**

**Committed to Veterans Like You 251-405-3677**  
Stringent training, deployments, frequent moves, and, for some, combat, put unique stresses on our Veterans and their families. Our team of health professionals created a unique approach that speaks to a unique set of mental wellness challenges.



**Saucy Q Bar B Que**

1111 Government St –Mobile AL  
 SAVE THE DATE– January 17

SAVC meeting -Our meeting starts at 0830 a.m., but we like to gather earlier for breakfast or coffee and just talk about Veterans Stuff and what is going on.

– Lou

**SAVC (FRIENDS CARING FOR FRIENDS)**

**TAKING THE TIME TO BE THERE FOR YOU,  
 GATHERING MONTHLY AT THE SAUCEY QUE.  
 EAGER TO LISTEN TO THE MANY AND FEW,  
 PITCHING IN TO HELP WITH TASK TO DO.**

**ALWAYS THERE TO LEND A HELPING HAND,  
 TO OFFER HELP ANY WAY THAT THEY CAN.  
 THOUGHTFUL, UNSELFISH, KIND AND TRUE,  
 THE SAVC ALWAYS HAS THE TIME FOR YOU.**

*Joe Mc Cormack*  
 JOMAC - Poetry in Action

