



# 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



Lou Lartigue  
251-471-4322  
Council President

Pat Downing  
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Council VP

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Pete Riehm  
251-442-4349  
LNO/MC

SAVC e-mail: [support@savc.info](mailto:support@savc.info)

*Capt Hal Pierce, Bill Atkison, Sy Lichtenfeld, Spiritus Emeritus SAVC*

**NEXT SAVC MEETING - Tuesday- February 20, 2024 – 8:30 a.m. - Saucy Q BBQ**

1111 Government St–Mobile AL

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

## Presidents Corner:



*“We are full into Winter and if early January was anything like what we can expect for the next couple of months—break out the Overcoat and Long Johns. I want to thank all those brave Vets and Supporters who came through the snow and ice to attend our January SAVC Meeting. I was not surprised we had a full house because as Vets we have been there and been through worse.*

*February and March will be busy for Veterans. We have the opening of the Vets Recover Facility, Vietnam Memorial Day Ceremony; and not to mention, Mardi Gras, Super Bowl, and local Elections. We have had several political candidates come to talk with us and we will have a couple more at our February meeting. We hope that by hearing from them you are more informed, especially as it pertains to Veterans affairs and support. Remember to do your buddy checks, especially during these cold days.”*

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

## Chaplains Corner:



*Greetings everyone!*

*It’s multiplied mercy, peace, and love, Read Jude 2  
“Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.”*

*When something is multiplied it is increased greatly in number, quantity, and or value. In this scripture, the first thing Jude identified was mercy. When mercy is multiplied that means it’s more than enough. Now He didn’t stop there, He also said peace be multiplied. Peace that surpasses all understanding (Good stuff).*

*Now we come to the main thing which is love. When our love is multiplied, we are able to love the Lord with all our hearts, minds, and souls; and Love others Anyway!*

*In Jesus’ Name Amen!*

Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain SAVC



**THE NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**Mobile Council**

### OUR MISSION

The Mobile Council of the Navy League of the United States is dedicated to enhancing and supporting local active-duty sea service members and their families within the Southern Alabama area; informing local public and elected officials of the importance of strong sea services; and supporting local youth programs such as the Sea Cadets, NJROTC and college NROTC programs.

### Dinner With a Sailor

The Mobile Council Navy League is continuing our program to allow local citizens to meet Navy Sailors from our visiting Mardi Gras ship, the USS DONALD COOK (DDG 75).

The ship will be visiting Mobile 9 -14 FEB 24. The program is "Dinner for Sailors" which allows local folks to go online to complete an application to invite some Sailors to dinner or parade. The minimum invitation is 2 Sailors. If you are interested, please follow the link below and complete the online application. Someone will contact you to confirm your invite and have additional information.

[TAKE A SAILOR TO DINNER APPLICATION \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com)

### 2024 MOBILE COUNCIL NAVY LEAGUE MARDI GRAS RECEPTION

[2024 Mardi Gras Reception | The Navy League Mobile Council](https://www.navyleague.org)

The Mobile Council of the Navy League Mardi Gras Reception will be held on Friday, February 9, 2024 at the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Building. If you have attended this event in the past you know the Chamber is a great place to watch the Crewe of Columbus Parade.

Mobile Council Members are encouraged to bring potential Navy Leaguers to this event.

#### RECEPTION DETAILS

##### When:

Friday, February 9, 2024

##### Where:

Mobile Chamber of Commerce Building  
451 Government Street, Mobile, AL

##### Time:

5:00pm – Cash Bar Opens

6:00pm – 8:45pm – Hors d'oeuvres Served

**\*ARRIVE BY 5:00PM TO AVOID TRAFFIC AND PARKING ISSUES\***

**The Mobile Chamber of Commerce Building will close promptly at 9:00pm**

**NO CARS CAN BE LEFT IN THE CHAMBER PARKING LOT AFTER 9:00pm**

### COST

Mobile Council Member & Guest  
\$50.00 per person

**\*\*\*\*Local Dues Must Be Paid\*\*\*\***

**Cash Bar: Beer \$3, Wine/Mixed Drinks \$5**

*"Please consider sponsoring one or more of our Active Duty guests by offering to purchase additional tickets. This helps our council provide tickets at no cost for the Active-Duty attendees."*

**Reservation and payment must be received prior to January 30, 2024**

Send Payment To:

Mobile Council of the Navy League  
c/o Lynne Price  
P.O. Box 686, Mobile, AL 36601

or Online at: <https://navyleaguemobile.org/>

Contact: Lynne Price at [lprikenavyleague@gmail.com](mailto:lprikenavyleague@gmail.com)  
Phone: 251-463-8480

[2024 Mardi Gras Reception | The Navy League Mobile Council](https://www.navyleague.org)

**The Navy League Mobile Council**  
Lynne Price, Administrative Assistant  
P. O. Box 686 Mobile, AL 36601  
251-438-2834



### USS Donald Cook DDG 75

**CLASS - BURKE Flight II As Built.**

Displacement 8373 Tons (Full), Dimensions, 504' 7"  
(oa) x 66' 11" x 20' (Max)

Armament 1 x 5"/54 RF, 2 Phalanx 20mm Guns, 90  
VLS Cells, 8 Harpoon Missiles, 6 x 12.75" TT.

Machinery, 100,000 SHP; 4 GE LM-2500 Gas  
Turbines, 2 screws; Speed, 30+ Knots, Range 4400  
NM@ 20 Knots, Crew 370.

### Operational and Building Data

Laid down by Bath Iron Works, Bath ME on July 7  
1996. Launched May 3 1997. Commissioned  
December 4 1998.

Active unit of the US Navy.  
Homeported at Norfolk, VA.

**SAVE THE DATE: 5/9/224 – 5/12/2024**



Robertsdale, AL	Veterans Memorial Group of Baldwin County	5/9/24	5/12/24
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Bringing The Wall home to communities throughout our country allows the souls enshrined on the Memorial to exist once more among family and friends in the peace and comfort of familiar surroundings. The traveling exhibit provides thousands of veterans who have been unable to cope with the prospect of facing The Wall to find the strength and courage to do so within their own communities, thus allowing the healing process to begin.

*The Wall* exhibit features a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point. Visitors experience The Wall rising above them as they walk towards the apex, a key feature of the design of The Wall in D.C.

### **HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL THE INSPIRATION**

On January 21, 1970, Jan Scruggs was having his morning cup of coffee, but he was far from his kitchen table at home. He was in Vietnam, serving in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

In the nine months since he'd been in-country, Scruggs had already seen a lot of action and had been wounded in a battle near Xuan Loc. He had spent three months recovering in a hospital before being sent back to fight with rocket-propelled grenade fragments permanently embedded in his body.

On that January day, "There was a big explosion," Scruggs recalled. "I ran over to see a truck on fire and a dozen of my friends dying." They had been unloading an ammunition truck when the explosion occurred. Scruggs would never forget the awful scene. He would never forget those friends.

In fact, he would spend a lifetime trying to honor their memory.



**FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT EMERITUS**  
Photo: © 2012, Matt McClain / For the Washington Post

*Jan Scruggs retired from VVMF in June 2015.*

In 1979, Jan Scruggs conceived the idea of building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., as a tribute to all who served during one of the longest wars in American history. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is among the most visited memorials in the nation's capital.

Scruggs was a wounded and decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, having served in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade of the U.S. Army. He felt a memorial would serve as a healing device for a different kind of wound—that inflicted on our national psyche by the long and controversial Asian war.

Scruggs launched the effort with \$2,800 of his own money and gradually gained the support of other Vietnam veterans in persuading Congress to provide a prominent location on federal government property somewhere in Washington, D.C. After a difficult struggle, Congress responded, and the site chosen was on the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial.

As president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Inc., the nonprofit organization created to build and maintain the Memorial, Scruggs headed up the effort that raised \$8.4 million and saw the Memorial completed in just two years. It was dedicated on November 13, 1982, during a week-long national salute to Vietnam veterans in the nation's capital.

After the completion of the Memorial, Scruggs, along with author Joel L. Swerdlow, put to paper *To Heal a Nation*—the moving story of Scruggs' efforts to build The Wall. In May 1988, it became an "NBC Movie of the Week."

Scruggs is a native of Washington, D.C, and grew up in Bowie, Md. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from American University in Washington, D.C., and his law degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

[Jan Scruggs - Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund \(vvmf.org\)](http://vvmf.org)

## VA News :

What can VA disability compensation do for you? –

Many Veterans may not be aware of life-changing benefits they've earned—and deserve—through military service. This outreach kit includes flyers, social media graphics and suggested corresponding language, radio public service announcements (PSA), newsletter content, and a sample blog post to help you spread the word about VA disability compensation benefits. Please share this information broadly with your networks, family, and friends.



**VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS**

VA offers disability compensation—a monthly tax-free payment—to Veterans who got sick or injured while serving in the military and to Veterans whose service made an existing condition worse.

You may qualify for VA disability compensation for physical and mental health conditions that developed or worsened due to service. Some conditions include:

- Chronic (long-lasting) back pain resulting in a current diagnosed back disability
- Breathing problems resulting from a current lung condition or lung disease
- Severe hearing loss
- Cancers or other conditions caused by contact with toxic chemicals or other dangerous materials
- Ulcers
- Mental or physical health conditions related to military sexual trauma
- Anxiety/Depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)

Already have a disability rating? Applying for other ratable disabilities **will not** put your current disability rating at risk. All Veterans are encouraged to apply for the benefits they've earned and deserve!

You can apply for disability benefits at any time, no matter how long it has been since you separated from military service. File a claim today!

**4 EASY WAYS TO FILE A CLAIM:**

- Online:** Start your application at [VA.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/introduction](https://va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/introduction).
- In Person:** Bring your application to a [VA Regional Office near you](#).
- By Mail:** Send [VA Form 21-526EZ](#) to Department of Veterans Affairs, Claims Intake Center, P.O. Box 4444, Janesville, WI 53547-4444.
- Get Help:** [Find an accredited VA representative](#) who can help you file your claim.

Choosing VA means getting everything you need in one spot. Learn more about VA disability compensation, eligibility requirements, and filing a claim at [VA.gov/disability/](https://va.gov/disability/).

Have Questions? 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) is always the right number.

[What can VA disability compensation do for you? - VA News](#)

## 2023 VA Federal Benefits Booklet: Unlocking a wealth of support for Veterans

VA is pleased to present the "2023 VA Federal Benefits Booklet for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers," a thorough guide that explains the numerous benefits to Veterans, their families and caregivers.

[VA Federal Benefits Booklet - VA News](#)

## How to Apply for a Discharge Upgrade

Answer a series of questions to get customized step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a discharge upgrade or correction. If your application goes through and your discharge is upgraded, you'll be eligible for the VA benefits you earned during your period of service.

All branches of the military consider you to have a strong case for a discharge upgrade if you can show your discharge was connected to any of these categories:

- Mental health conditions, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Sexual assault or harassment during military service (at VA, we refer to this as military sexual trauma or MST)
- Sexual orientation (including under the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy)

## Alabama non-profits receive mental health grant aimed at helping veterans

— From Alabama Dept. of Veterans Affairs

The State Board of Veterans Affairs and Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs have announced the non-profit organizations and higher-education institutions that will get funding through the Supporting Alabama's Veterans Grant program. The one-time grants will fund programs and services that directly address mental health issues, aiming to provide accessible and quality services to those who have served our nation.

ADVA Commissioner Kent Davis said, "Alabama is continuously coming together to address the needs of the veterans' community and strengthen its service for those who have served. This opportunity, made possible through an appropriation of American Rescue Plan funds by the Alabama Legislature and Governor Kay Ivey, aids in our collective mission to care for veterans and their families. We eagerly anticipate the impactful services that these non-profits and higher-education institutions will produce."

[Alabama non-profits receive mental health grant aimed at helping veterans - WAKA 8](#)

## H.R.1083 - Caring for Survivors Act of 2023

118th Congress (2023-2024) | Get alerts

**BILL** Hide Overview X

**Sponsor:** Rep. Hayes, Jahana (D-CI-5) (Introduced 02/17/2023)

**Committees:** House - Veterans Affairs

**Latest Action:** House - 03/20/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. (All Actions)

**Tracker:** Introduced Passed House Passed Senate To President Became Law

[H.R.1083 - 118th Congress \(2023-2024\): Caring for Survivors Act of 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

### Shown Here: Introduced in House (02/17/2023)

### Caring for Survivors Act of 2023

This bill increases the monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to surviving spouses through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Dependency and indemnity compensation is a monthly payment made to eligible survivors (i.e., spouses, parents, or children) of (1) certain veterans who died as a result of a service-connected condition; (2) service members killed while on active military duty or active or inactive duty for training; or (3) veterans who did not die from a service-connected condition, but were totally disabled by a service-connected disability for a certain period of time.

The bill also (1) reduces, from 10 years to 5 years, the period of time that certain veterans must have been rated totally disabled due to a service-connected disability in order for a survivor to qualify for benefits; and (2) specifies the amount that is payable to survivors of veterans who were rated totally disabled for a period of less than 10 years before their death.

### How Leap Day Balances Our Calendar

Every four years we have a Leap Year, which means a day is added to the end of February (the shortest month) called Leap Day. The extra day is a corrective measure that synchronizes the calendar with the earth's almost year-long orbit around the sun. Without Leap Day, a few hours would cumulatively disappear every year, eventually throwing off our calendar and seasons.

Abraham Lincoln's Birthday	February 12
George Washington's Birthday	February 22

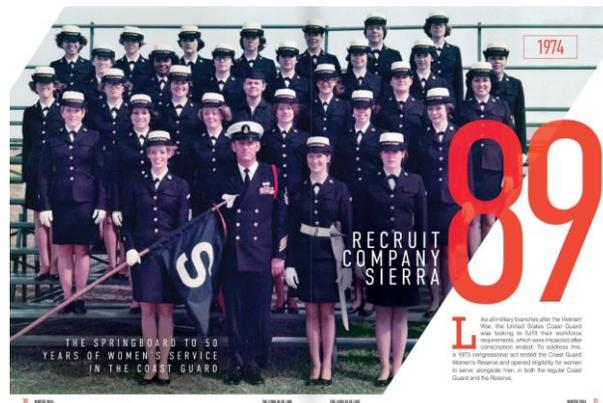
[February Holidays and Observances \(thespruce.com\)](#)

### Black History Month

February 2	Groundhog Day	#groundhogday	United States
February 10	Lunar New Year	#lunarnewyear	Worldwide
February 13	Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras	#shrovetuesday	Christian
February 14	Ash Wednesday	#ashtag	Christian
February 14	Valentine's Day	#valentinesday	Worldwide
February 19	Presidents Day	#presidentsday	United States

[February 2024 Holidays, National, International by Holiday Insights.](#)

### CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF THE US COAST GUARD



On Dec. 5th, 1973, Congress passed Public Law 93-174, allowing women to enlist in the Coast Guard, marking a decisive step towards gender equality in the service. Challenging longstanding policies of gender segregation, women were finally able to fully integrate into our service and began a proud tradition of standing the watch.

Read the full article here: [LONG BLUE LINE-](#)



Monday, February 26 – 9:00 a.m.  
Spring Hill College Golf Course Café  
All Veterans welcome for coffee, doughnuts,  
and conversation!  
Hosted by: Gentiva Hospice



## Congressional Gold Medal Awarded To Trailblazing Veteran



Purcell Johnson was posthumously awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for his time in service as a part of the Montford Point Marines. Although he is not alive to see it, his part in a trailblazing history earned him a Congressional Gold Medal. Johnson served in the Marines during the Second World War from 1943 to 1946.

The medal was posthumously accepted by his 104-year-old sister, Romay Davis, who herself is a Congressional Gold Medal recipient.

If you know a former Montford Point Marine who has not yet been honored, you can visit [montfordpointmarines.org](http://montfordpointmarines.org) for more information on how to do so. Living veterans can expect to get their medal in 72 hours or less.

[Congressional Gold Medal awarded to trailblazing veteran \(wsfa.com\)](http://wsfa.com)

## Air Force officer is first active service member to win Miss America

At just 22 years old, Air Force 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Madison Marsh made military history on Jan. 14 as the first active-duty service member to be crowned Miss America.

[Air Force officer is first active service member to win Miss America \(militarytimes.com\)](http://militarytimes.com)



## WKRG – SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

MOBILE, Ala. ([WKRG](http://WKRG)) —A retired Army veteran is now showing people a path to success. Chevelle Thomas is a Senior JOTC instructor at Murphy High School. She retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel after 23 years of service.



## American Legion District #33

Much thanks to the nearly 40 Legionnaires, Sons of the Legion and Auxiliary from American Legion Posts in Mobile and Baldwin Counties for serving veterans and staff today at W.F. Green Veterans Home in Bay Minette, AL

-Donna Stacey (Facebook)



## Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association 28-6 Mobile, AL

CVMA 28-6 enjoyed an Ice cream social with the Heroes at William F. Green State Veterans Home on Jan 27, 2024. (Facebook)





**USS ALABAMA Teak Deck Replacement Update:** BMP is proud to announce that Phase 4 of the Teak Deck Replacement Project has been completed. Lt. Col. Ebb Counts, USA (Ret.), Deputy Executive Director, is serving as project manager for BMP. Youngblood-Barrett Construction and Engineering LLC is the general contractor for the project. Volkert Inc. is the engineering firm for the project. The teak deck replacement project is broken into five phases. Work has moved on to the fifth and final phase of the project. Stay tuned for further updates and to see the final results. *Teak Deck's completion date is scheduled for March 27, 2024.*

*2023 Christmas week was the best since the park opened in 1965 with 9833 visitors. Online ticket sales were very successful.*

2024 LIVING HISTORY CREW DATES

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February 3  
March 23  
June 1  
August 31  
October 5  
December 7

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Included in admission. Planes fly based on weather & mechanical safety.

Experience the USS ALABAMA like never before with our guided tours for a limited time only! On Tuesdays in January - March, visitors will be able to enjoy a 90-minute tour as they board our WWII battleship. Guided tours are a first come, first served basis and are included with general admission. Please arrive at the Ticket Office to begin the tour. Don't miss this unique opportunity to discover the "Mighty A"!

To purchase general admission tickets, please visit: <https://www.ussalabama.com/plan-your-visit/admissions/>



**GIVE THE HELP  
THEY NEED,  
WHEN THEY NEED IT**

Register for Mental Health First Aid today

**Mental Health First Aid**

Vets Recover is proud to offer Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) to our community. Through this course, we aim to elevate our community's response to the mental health crisis in our area and educate community members on the value of building resiliency.

During this 8-hour session, you will learn to identify and provide an initial, effective response for someone facing mental health challenges.

**Upcoming Trainings**

Register today by visiting our [website](#) or by calling 251-405-3677.

**Hosting a Training**

Interested in hosting a training at your organization?  
Contact Melissa McKnight, Director of Community Integration, at [msm@vetsrecover.org](mailto:msm@vetsrecover.org).

**CONTACT US**

Vets Recover  
251-405-3677

Melissa McKnight  
[msm@vetsrecover.org](mailto:msm@vetsrecover.org)

<https://vetsrecover.org/calendar/mental-health-first-aid/>

**MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**

Interested in hosting  
Mental Health First Aid at your  
organization for your team?

**We will come to you.**

MHFA is an 8-hour course that helps you identify and provide an initial, effective response for someone facing mental health challenges.



Contact Melissa McKnight,  
Director of Community Integration,  
[msm@vetsrecover.org](mailto:msm@vetsrecover.org) or 251-405-3677.

**BATTLESHIP MEMORIAL PARK**

**HISTORY'S MONUMENTS ON DISPLAY,  
CEREMONIES IN A DIGNIFIED WAY.  
SELF-GUIDED TOUR BESIDE THE BAY,  
WHERE THOUSANDS ENJOY EACH DAY.**

**BATTLESHIP ALABAMA & SUBMARINE DRUM,  
ARE TWO ATTRACTIONS OUTDONE BY NONE.  
AMPHIBIOUS TOUR OF MOBILE, RIVER & BAY,  
AN ADVENTURE OF FUN CONDUCTED ALL DAY.**

**JOMAC**

## Alabama State Veterans Home Program

Are you familiar with our Alabama State Veterans Home Program? ADVA offers a very affordable special kind of care to Veterans with four facilities around the state. Applications are available at your local Veterans Service Office, by contacting the facility, or you may download the application here:

<https://va.alabama.gov/vets-home-program/>

### Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home

It is officially 2024! The state veterans home in **City of Enterprise, Ala.** will be opening later this year. The Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins State Veterans Home is nearly 90% complete. The state-of-the-art skilled-care nursing facility will be approximately 182,000 square feet and house 174 residents.

2022



Jan 2024



ALABAMA  
VETERANS RESOURCE

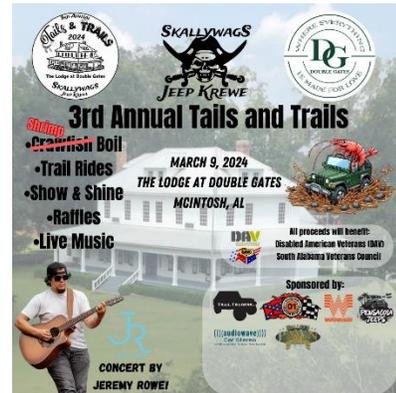
In partnership with the SAVC and Scuttlebutt Radio Network, we are creating a Veteran Owned Business List. Please register if you are a VOB or an organization helping veterans/military and share with other Veteran business owners. This effort aims to provide support to and increase awareness of Veteran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

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024 AT 10 AM – 8 PM**

### 3rd Annual Tails and Trails

The Lodge at Double Gates, LLC



[3rd Annual Tails and Trails Tickets, Sat, Mar 9, 2024 at 10:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)

## OUT OF THE DEEP GULF COAST VETERANS SERVICE A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

**SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024 AT 6 AM – 1 PM**

### Inaugural Celebrity Fishing Rodeo

American Legion Post 250

10950 Dauphin Island Parkway, Mobile, AL

There'll be 10 local celebrities from radio host, meteorologists to former NFL & college football players who'll be fishing.

10 Celebrities, 10 boats. 10 teams!

Team donation is \$1,000! Please invite your friends! I have a sponsorship letter, and you can get your own sponsors (multiple, if needed) to enter your team!

We accept credit cards, Venmo, checks, and cash. We cannot hold your team's spot until payment is received. Tax-exempt receipt will be provided upon request.

MOBILE MEMORIAL  
GARDENS CEMETERY  
MEMORIALIZING MEMORIES®



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

**VOTE - EXERCISE YOUR FREEDOM - VOTE**

**Announcement of Primary Election by Judge of Probate, Don Davis, Mobile County's Chief Elections Official**

Judge Don Davis, Mobile County's Judge of Probate and Chief Election Officer, reminds ALL Mobile County voters that TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024 is Alabama's Presidential Preference and Statewide Primary Election Day.

[Announcement Of Primary Election By Judge Of Probate, Don Davis, Mobile County's Chief Elections Official : Mobile County \(mobilecountyal.gov\)](#)

**Topics of Interest** – Candidates for the upcoming elections spoke briefly about their platforms at the January SAVC meeting– Senator Greg Albritton, Nick Matranga, Richard Foreman, Chris Callaghan, Ashleigh Long, David Melton, and Eucellis Sullivan, Johana Bucci will be speaking at the February meeting.

[Announcement Of Voter Registration Deadlines For The March 5 Primary By Judge Of Probate Don Davis, Mobile County's Chief Elections Officer : Mobile County \(mobilecountyal.gov\)](#)

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**South Alabama Veterans Council  
January 16, 2024 Meeting  
Breakfast was provided by  
Vital Care Hospice**

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Lou Lartigue called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. –32 people braved the inclement 30-degree weather to attend - Location Saucy Q BBQ

**OPENING PRAYER:** Champlain Michael Austin

**PLEDGE:** Col Pat Downing

**WELCOME:** Lou Lartigue welcomed everyone, and recognized new attendees.

**MINUTES:** Minutes for the November meeting were mailed in the newsletter. Nine snail mail newsletters and 550 emails. Minutes approved as read.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Hat collected \$41.00, and \$20.00 was donated to Saucy Q for waiter's tip.

**GRANT:** The Grant program received a donation from CARVANA in honor of Neil Bruyn's mom, Mrs. Jean Bruyn who passed away in November. Quilts of Valor \$300. Donation to Joyce Reed who could not make it today.

**Veterans Activities:** Jim Jeffries was unable to attend.

**State Veterans Cemetery – Pat Downing** reported on the expansion project, Family Wreath Day, and currently 3873 internments.

**BMP - Col Patrick Downing – Gen Cobb, Exec Director - 2023 Christmas week was the best since the park opened in 1965 with 9833 visitors. Online ticket sales were very successful. Ebb Counts Teak Deck's completion date is scheduled for March 27, 2024.**

**ADVA – Adm Kent Davis – Reported on the expansion at the cemetery, Dedication and Consecration ceremony on March 26, coinciding with the Veterans Town Hall in Fairhope. Davis reported on the Veteran's Homes and the grant for Non-Profits to address Veteran's Mental Health.**

**Armed Forces Day/Blue Star Salute- Lou will have a meeting today to discuss the status of AFD/BSS.**

**VMRT – Fran, no report today**

**Navy League – Pete Riehm, USS Donald Cook arriving Feb 9 will be here until Ash Wednesday, and USNS Hospital ship in town for Mardi Gras. Encouraged everyone to sign up to take a Sailor out for dinner. On February 9 the Navy League will host a party for the sailors at the Chamber, RSVP - everyone is invited.**

**Adm Davis reported - Maxwell AFB will have an Airshow, the Blue Angels, April 6-7 to coincide with Navy week.**

**Topics of Interest** – Candidates for the upcoming elections spoke briefly on their platforms – Senator Greg Albritton, Nick Matranga, Richard Foreman, Chris Callaghan, Ashleigh Long, David Melton, and Eucellis Sullivan, Johana Bucci was unable to attend due to a power outage at her home.

**Guest Speaker: Vital Caring, Shelley Robinson** explained their services. Shelley invited veterans to participate in their Vet-to-Vet program.

**Montford Point Marines – MGySgt House** reported on the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony to be held in Montgomery.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 am  
Fran Barber  
Secretary, SAVC  
January 16, 2024