



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
251-751-6619
Council VP

Fran Barber
251-605-1290
Secretary / NewsLetter
Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain
251-391-8176

Tom Schwarz
251-649-8459
Treasurer / Chambless Fund

Pete Riehm
251-442-4349
LNO/MC

SAVC e-mail: support@savc.info

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

NEXT SAVC MEETING – Tuesday, April 16, 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 hope everyone had a great March and Easter Season. We had a great Vietnam Veteran Memorial Day sunrise flag raising at the Battleship Vietnam Memorial. We would like to see more of our Vietnam Veterans attending.

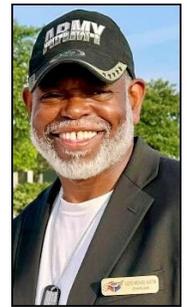
We are well on our way into April and will be planning for the Armed Forces Day Celebration on Saturday 18 May.

We are also looking forward to the Grand Opening of Veterans Recovery facility on 17 April at 1000 hrs.

We encourage everyone to continue doing our 'Buddy Checks' and help our Veterans in need, especially those older Veterans who may need help with home chores or grass/outdoor chores."

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

Chaplains Corner:



Greetings everyone!

*It's a new creature
Read 2 Corinthians 5:17*

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things become new."

The operative words here are (if and in) Two small words with great implications. Either we are or we are not. Either we are in or we are out. First of all, we must be in Christ, and Christ gives us the power to become a whole new creature, brand new. The old things are passed away, which means that the old things are dead. Then in the process, we look around, and not just some things, but behold ALL things become new. WOW! Isn't that wonderful. So, let's remove the IF, and stay in, stay with, stay obedient, stay faithful, stay true, and get ALL of our new.

*In the Name Jesus' Amen!
Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain SAVC*

The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) dedicated the Phase II expansion of the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Spanish Fort on Tuesday with a consecration ceremony.

The expansion adds 2,762 pre-placed vault sites (casket sites), 960 columbarium niches (above-ground urn sites), and a memorial wall that includes 100 sites. It also provides an update to roadways, storm drainage, irrigation, and other expansion infrastructure.

U.S. Army (Ret.) Col. Patrick Downing delivered the keynote address. After the ceremony, he was presented a Distinguished Service Medal by Commissioner Davis on behalf of Governor Kay Ivey.

The Phase II expansion was funded thanks to a \$5 million grant through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. This was the first planned expansion for the facility, which will actively serve Alabama Veterans with interments for a total of 100 years.



March 29, 2024 - Fran Barber

The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 was signed by 45th U.S. President Donald J. Trump, designating every March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

This particular day joins six other military-centric annual observances codified in Title 4 of the United States Code §6 (i.e., Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, Navy Day, Veterans Day). 29 March is a fitting choice for a day honoring Vietnam veterans. It was chosen to be observed in perpetuity as March 29, 1973, was the day the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was disestablished and the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. In addition, on and around this same day, Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration honors all veterans who served on

active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, regardless of location.

At 0700 on Friday, March 29 we began our day, as we have done for the past seven years, with a Ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Battleship Memorial Park, Vietnam Veteran Col Patrick Downing was the guest speaker, Chaplain Alan Singleton gave the invocation, Janie Neal sang the National Anthem, and the flags were raised and lowered by the P.L. Wilson Detachment Marine Corp League, led by their Commandant Tom Claxton. Ron Moore and Neil Bruyn placed the wreath as the PGR stood a Flag Line. It was a fitting ceremony in honor of our Vietnam Veterans, and those who were POW/MIA/KIA.

The First Commemoration Ceremony of the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Day was held at the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery on March 29, 2024.

Joe Buschel, Director of the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery opened the ceremony, Col Patrick Downing was the guest speaker, and the SW AL Patriot Guard Riders, led by Fairhope's 2023 Veteran of the Year - PGR Ride Captain JuJu Lessard, maintained a Flag Line while two Vietnam Veterans Greg Selman and Frank Cole placed a wreath in the Memorial Circle in honor of Vietnam Veterans, Welcome home Heroes, and those POW/MIA/KIA who didn't come home.

Others attending the ceremony were Vietnam Veteran, Dr. Booth; Veteran Advocate South Alabama Veterans Council Secretary, Fran Barber; cemetery employees; Cathy, Darlene, and the groundskeeper crew.

Friday night a special Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Pinning Ceremony was held at the Revelation Missionary Baptist Church on Taylor Lane in Mobile hosted by the 92nd Infantry Division WWII Buffalo Soldiers Association Alabama Chapter.





South Alabama Veterans Council VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

Sgt Thomas G. Claxton, USMC

Thomas G. Claxton (Sgt) served in the U.S. Marine Corps during 1956-1959. Tom was stationed at Camp Lejeune for his complete tour. He served as Supply Chief for the *Honest John Rocket Unit with Atomic Warhead Capabilities*. He continued to serve in the Marine Corps Reserve until he was discharged in August 1962.

Over the years Tom has continued to serve the community in various organizations and capacities. Namely his involvement with the P. L. Wilson Detachment of the Marine Corps League as the Commandant, the Toys for Tots Program, and the Homes for Our Troops Project. Tom was the Founder of the Veterans Helping Veterans Car Show & Jeep Bash On the Bay, and other important programs to help our veterans. For his service to the Veterans Community, Governor Bob Riley appointed Tom as an Honorary Colonel for the State of Alabama.

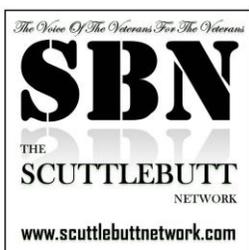
For his dedicated service, Tom has been awarded six Distinguished Service Awards, two National Recruiter Awards, a Silver, and a Bronze Award, and one National Recruiter Award. Tom is co-founder and co-host of Scuttlebutt Radio which serves both the veterans and civilian communities of our area.

Tom and his wife, Annette, together have 4 children, 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

“We are proud to be able to enjoy and serve our families and continue to support our Veterans and Veterans Events.” Tom Claxton.

Join Tom every Wednesday 8-9 pm CST on Scuttlebutt Network FM106.5 The Voice of the Veterans for the Veterans.

www.scuttlebuttnetwork.com



APRIL DATES TO REMEMBER

April Month of the Military Child

April 5, 2024 – Gold Star Spouses Day – A day dedicated to those whose spouses gave their lives while serving in the U.S. military or as a result of service-connected injuries or illness.

April 14, 2024 – Air Force Reserve Birthday

April 23, 2024 – Army Reserve Birthday

April 30, 2024 – National Military Brats Day



The Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission was honored to have the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, Commissioner Kent Davis, Rear Admiral, US Navy (Ret) at the March 26 planning meeting which is held at the Mobile Chamber of Commerce. Commissioner Davis gave an overview of how the ALDVA impacts all veterans and their family members in Alabama.

This year the Veterans Day Activities are promising to be another Nationally recognized event marking Mobile as one of the top VA National Regional Sites for the Veterans Day Parade.

VETS RECOVER - DETOX & RESIDENTIAL FACILITY
GRAND OPENING - APRIL 17, 2024
1200 Springhill Avenue, Mobile, AL



The new Vets Recover Detox plus Residential Treatment Facility will be a 34-bed unit located in a previously abandoned, historic school building on Springhill Avenue in Mobile, AL.

The focus is helping veterans and first responders, eight of those beds are for people who need to detox and will be open for everyone. They will care for people regardless of their ability to pay but will take private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Boating Safety Education
 Become a better, safer boater. Find a course near you!

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary boating courses provide instruction to boaters at all levels, from the fundamental to the advanced. Our courses (virtual and classroom) are taught by experienced and knowledgeable CGAUX instructors committed to the highest standards of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. They are offered in two modalities: virtual, video conference with CGAUX Virtual PE Instructors, and classroom setting with CGAUX PE Instructors.

FOLLOW THE LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TIME AND PLACE Aux safe boating course, free boat inspections, upcoming events and joining the Coast Guard Aux.

[Welcome to the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Official Web portal \(cgaux.org\)](http://www.cgaux.org)



2024 Winter Sports Clinic

April 1 – 7, 2024

Held in Snowmass (near Aspen), Colorado

A world leader in rehabilitation, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic provides nearly 400 profoundly disabled Veterans with training and rehabilitation every year.

Veterans with TBIs, spinal cord injuries, visual impairments, amputations and other severe disabilities are challenged to overcome perceived limitations through adaptive skiing, sled hockey, scuba diving, rock wall climbing, education and other activities.

[National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic](#)

[The Iraq War: Veteran Stories of Consequences & Resilience - DAV](#)

Mighty Warrior Foundation
PO Box 563
Bay Minette, AL 36507
(251) 298-7346

At Mighty Warrior

Foundation we believe...

...in giving back to those who have served, with a focus on three guiding principles for success— identifying and removing barriers, providing resources and education, and stimulating personal and professional

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2024 AT 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Care packages for our deployed military

Mobile, AL

[Care packages for our deployed military | Facebook](#)



USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

2703 Battleship Pkwy, Mobile

Battleship Memorial Park is open for tours from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Last ticket is sold at 4:00 pm.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024 AT 10 AM

Tolling of the Boats

USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

Tolling of the Boats Join us in the Medal of Honor Aircraft Pavilion for a memorial ceremony remembering the 65 US submarines and their crews lost during war. This ceremony is part of a national memorial service. Included with general admission. To view all other events, please click [here](#).

APR 19 AT 12 PM – APR 20 AT 3 PM

Dixie Division Military Vehicle Show

2703 Battleship Pkwy, Mobile, AL, United States, Alabama 36602



SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024 AT 10 AM – 11 AM

Tribute to Armed Forces Day

2703 Battleship Pkwy, Mobile, AL, United States, Alabama 36602

MAY 31 AT 12 PM – JUN 2 AT 5 PM

Museum Ships Weekend: Ships Across America Radio Broadcast

USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park



The following information is beneficial to those people interested in finding information about burials in and around the state of Alabama. Regarding those searching for family members buried in Oaklawn and other historic cemeteries in Mobile and Alabama, we highly encourage everyone to contact their local libraries. For us in Mobile these resources have been great partners, these are all that have been of great help.

Mobile Public Library Local History and Genealogy. The librarians there are great and do their best to help. The library business hours and other information is at:

<https://www.mobilepubliclibrary.org/locations/local-history.php> (251) 494-2190 mainlhg@mplonline.org

Be sure to have all the family names, relevant dates, and as much family information as you can provide. Much of the work that has been done by community members on these cemeteries has been put on file there including burial ledgers (1931 to approx. 1970) that have been donated and copies of Probate Record maps of the cemetery.

There are also over 13,000 memorials that have been created in Find A Grave for Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery at:

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/25079/oaklawn-memorial-cemetery?>

These are based on families, community members' efforts, and the work that is being done by the community as well as discoveries that continue to be added as such information becomes available.

The library also hosts events for anyone searching for their family heritage including the upcoming event for the MOBILE AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/516154070378284>

one is scheduled for April 13 at 10:00 AM - <https://mobile-cep.bc.sirsidynix.net/event/beginning-genealogy-finding-your-african-american-ancestors/>

The Mobile Municipal Archives

<https://www.cityofmobile.org/archives/>

and the Mobile County Probate Court records library in the Mobile County Government Center Annex <https://probate.mobilecountyal.gov/about-us/contact>

all have been excellent sources as well.

Also, the University of South Alabama Archaeology Museum has been sponsoring free talks on African American cemeteries this spring, and there are two more coming up:

<https://www.southalabama.edu/org/archaeology/museum/upcomingevents.html> -

They also are hosting an exhibit that should not be missed: "Unwritten: Archaeology and Oral History of Jim Crow Mobile," highlighting the lives of the Lewis, Owens, and Griffin families is open at the University of South Alabama Archaeology Museum.

The exhibit can be viewed now until the end of April. [Archaeology Museum | Center for Archaeological Studies | Archaeology Museum \(southalabama.edu\)](#)

As the City and County in partnership, Contemporary Art Center's Guest Curator Program recently opened:

[Historic Avenue Cultural Center: Mobile County \(mobilecountyal.gov\)](https://mobilecountyal.gov) -

This tells the history of Davis Avenue to which a number of these cemeteries are connected.

Additionally, for anyone working with cemeteries in Alabama be aware of the Alabama Historical Commission Cemetery program information at:

<https://ahc.alabama.gov/cemeteryprogram.aspx> and their interactive mapping that has recently come online:

<https://ahc.alabama.gov/historicpreservationmap.aspx>

There is also the

[Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance \(alabama-cemetery-preservation.com\)](https://alabama-cemetery-preservation.com)

that maintains information and does programming across the state of Alabama.

The complex history of these cemeteries and the history of those buried in them continues to be written and understood and these resources mentioned continue to support and archive much of the work that has and is being done.

April 5, 2024–Gold Star Spouses Day

To our local Gold Star Spouses – we remember you every day

“The terms Gold Star family, Gold Star Spouses, and Gold Star Wives traditionally refer to the surviving loved ones of military members who lost their lives in the line of duty. Gold Star Spouses Day was created to honor these loved ones. Gold Star Spouses Day will be observed on Friday, April 5, 2024.”

What Is The Gold Star?

The U.S. Army official site explains that the *Gold Star* is a tradition that began during World War I.

Service flags were flown by military families during this time, with blue stars for every family member serving in uniform.

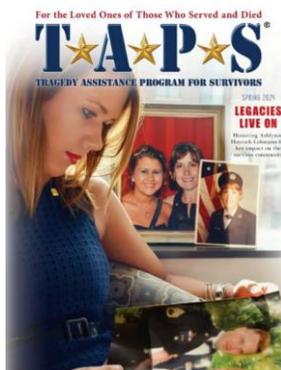
“If that loved one died,” Army.mil reports, “the blue star was replaced by a gold star. This allowed members of the community to know the price that the family had paid in the cause of freedom.” Later, the tradition evolved to include the wearing of a Gold Star lapel button, awarded by the military to surviving family members.



Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

"Grief isn't a disease or a disorder. It's a normal, healthy, required process. But, it's painful, so we associate it with a need for healing — maybe because it hurts so much or because it affects our ability to function in the world."

More here: <https://tapsnews.org/4ayVDnj>



TAPS spring magazine should be hitting mailboxes soon! From tips on finding the connection between learning and healing to personal stories and reflections from our community of military survivors, you can read the magazine online now at <https://www.taps.org/magazine/2024/spring>



What to expect after you get a disability rating

If you got a decision notice from the VA that confirms your disability rating (the rating that measures the severity of your disability), you may be able to get disability compensation or benefits. Find out what benefits you can get.

FOLLOW THE LINK:

[What To Expect After You Get A Disability Rating | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)



ALABAMA STATE VETERANS HOME PROGRAM

The Alabama state veterans homes are a very affordable solution for you or your loved ones. Applications may be obtained from your local [veterans service office](#), contacting the facility, or you may download the application from this website. For information on how to contact one of our veterans homes or to download an application, [click here](#) or click the name of the home you are interested in.

[ALABAMA STATE VETERANS HOME PROGRAM – Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

MOBILE MEMORIAL
GARDENS CEMETERY
MEMORIALIZING MEMORIES[®]



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

Jesse Andrews Jr. Detachment, Marine Corps League

Are you a Vietnam Veteran or do you know a Vietnam Veteran?

Mr. Huggins' U.S. History II class at Robertsdale High School is looking for veterans to interview on May 10th during one of two class periods: 8:00-8:44 OR 1:20-2:09. The class would like to record their interviews of Vietnam veterans and send these recordings to the Library of Congress to preserve their experiences. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Mr. Huggins at dmhuggins@bcbe.org to reserve an interview slot. This is scheduled the Friday that "The Wall that Heals" (a 3/4 replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall) will be at the Coliseum, so veterans can stop by the high school on their way or on the return from their visit to share their story.



Saucy Q Bar & Cafe

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



Lou Lartigue * 251-471-4922 Council President	Pat Downing 251-755-6619 Council VP	Fran Barber 251-505-1290 Secretary / Newsletter Lloyd Michael Austin, Chaplain 251-391-8176	Tom Schwarz 251-649-8429 Treasurer / Chamberlains Fund	Pete Riehm 251-442-4349 UNQ/NVC
-----------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

SAVC - MISSION

An organization for all people, serving all Veterans, and a coalition of Veterans, friends, and organizations working to benefit and further the cause of Veterans
Meetings are held once a month on the 3rd Tuesday

VETERANS SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONS

Veterans of Foreign Wars
American Legion
Disabled American Veterans
Marine Corps League
SAC Military Officers Association of America
Military Order Purple Heart
Monford Point Marine Association
Patriot Guard Riders
Navy League
Vietnam Veterans of America
USCG Petty Officers Association
92d Inf Div Buffalo Soldiers Assn
9th & 10th Home Cavalry

SERVING LOWER ALABAMA



MAJOR ANNUAL EVENTS

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day
Armed Forces Day
Memorial Day Events at Two Veterans Cemeteries
POW/MIA Candlelight Ceremony
Flags of Glory Week
Annual Veterans Day Parade

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

VA: Health, Benefits & Burial Support
Offices Alabama Career Center
Arlington South Foundation
American Red Cross
Battleship Memorial Park
Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc.
Chamber of Commerce-Military Affairs Committee
City of Mobile
Community Foundation of South Alabama
Daughters of the American Revolution
MCPSS-JRPT C/LOTC
Mobile Memorial Gardens
SBA, EEOC, ESGR
Scuttsbutt Radio-106.5 Fm
USA Student Vet Organization/Office
Vets Recover

SOUTH ALABAMA VETERANS COUNCIL MEETING DATES

APR 16, 2024
MAY 21, 2024
JUN 18, 2024
JUL 16, 2024
AUG 20, 2024
SEP 17, 2024
OCT 15, 2024
NOV 19, 2024

South Alabama Veterans Council Minutes March 19, 2024 Meeting Breakfast was provided by South Alabama Veterans Council

CALL TO ORDER: President Lou Lartigue called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. -52 attend - Location Saucy Q BBQ

OPENING PRAYER: Champlain Michael Austin

PLEDGE: Jim Jeffries

WELCOME: Lou Lartigue welcomed everyone, and recognized new attendees, congratulated Nick Matranga on his win, and welcomed Airbus, Veterans ERG Area Lead, James Burks, District Commander VFW, Alvin Solsa, Sr Vice CDR VFW Post 4328, Pablo Rosa-Perez, President, CPOA, and others.

Guest Speaker—Status of Veterans Court

Circuit Court Judge Michael Windom, Lou presented a SAVC Challenge coin to the Judge.

NEWSLETTER-MINUTES: Minutes for the February meeting was mailed in the newsletter. Nine snail mail newsletters and 550 emails. Minutes approved as read.

TREASURER'S REPORT-GRANTS: Veterans Court \$300.00 to Judge Windom. Deposits made from hat and donations.

Veterans Activities: Jim Jeffries reported on American Legion Events.

State Veterans Cemetery – Pat Downing reported the dedication and consecration ceremony will be held on Tuesday, March 26 at 1:00 p.m. Total 3956 internments.

NAVY LEAGUE – Pete Riehm, trying to arrange a tour of the USNS Comfort, and reported on the upcoming Memorial day services.

BMP - Col Patrick Downing – teak deck will be complete March 25. Gally temporarily closed for renovation. New Korean Veteran Memorial Bridge, two tanks relocated.

ADVA – Sissie-Louise Moore – Reported on the expansion at the cemetery, Dedication, and Consecration ceremony on March 26, coinciding with the Veterans Resource and Town Hall in Fairhope. TAPS is available 24/7, Bennie G. Atkins Veterans Home opening in the fall.

Vets Recovery: John Kilpatrick invited everyone to come and check out the facility, Tentative Grand Opening on April 17, and residential services applied for. Grant to renovate the property next door, it will be converted into outpatient services. The restaurant will be available to host events

Buffalo Soldiers 92ND Infantry – Eddie Irby invited everyone to attend the Vietnam Veterans Pinning Ceremony at Revelation Baptist Church, March 29.

Lou reported on the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Ceremony at BMP, on March 29, AFD/BSS scaled down this year.

VSO's reported on their upcoming events.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am

Fran Barber, Secretary, SAVC,

March 19, 2024