



# 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](mailto:support@savc.info)

*Capt Hal Pierce, Bill Atkeison, Spiritus Emeritus SAVC*

**NEXT SAVC MEETING - Tuesday- May 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:

" The past month was an SAVC month. Our monthly meeting was followed by the meeting for the Armed Forces Day & Blue Star Salute. Both meetings were well-attended and very productive. The month of May will be even more exciting and productive. We will have our AFD & BSS Event at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park on 20 May which will be a great tribute to those who are serving, those who have served, and those who gave all. Make sure you attend and bring your friends and neighbors.

On 29 May 2023, we will also recognize Memorial Day. Events start with the flag raising at Battleship Memorial Park Vietnam Memorial at 0700 hrs., followed by the Ceremony at the National Cemetery on Virginia Street at 0830 hrs., and the Ceremony at the Alabama Veterans Cemetery at Spanish Fort at 1100 hrs. There are other great events throughout Mobile and Baldwin County. Fran will get an email out with the info on the other events as they become available. The bottom line is that the month of May is a time to celebrate and honor those who are serving, have served, and most importantly those who gave all."

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

### Chaplains Corner:

*It's God forgives all and heals all.*

*Read Psalms 103:3*

*"Who forgives all our iniquities; who heals all our diseases."*

*Our God is an awesome God! The only true and living God! He is so gracious that he forgives all iniquities. He is so wonderful that He heals all of our diseases. One of the best revelations I ever received from God was the simple fact that he just wants to save us. In order to do that, our sins must be forgiven and we must be healed from all the diseases of sin.*

*In Jesus' Name Amen!*

*Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin,  
Chaplain SAVC*

**Armed Forces Day - Blue Star Salute  
5K Run/Walk 1Mile Fun Run May 20**

**Memorial 5K Run/Walk & 1 Mile Fun Run For  
Alabama's Fallen Heroes**

5K race will start at 7:30 AM 1 Mile will start at 7:35 AM

**Location:**

**USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park on the  
Causeway.**

**Benefits:**

Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. ([www.bluestarsalute.org](http://www.bluestarsalute.org)) Each runner will run with the name of one of Alabama's Fallen Heroes on their Race Bib, and afterward, during activities, they can visit the wall of Alabama's Faces of the Price of Freedom to see the faces of their fallen service member.

Enjoy a day full of entertainment, fun, and food at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park where there will be a variety of activities for everyone. Aeronautical entertainment provided by Silver Wings and others. Music provided by Alabama's 151st Army National Guard Band. Join us in honoring Alabama's Military Service members, Veterans, and our Fallen Heroes. Many Veteran Service Organizations will be available for serving our military and Veterans. The day will begin with a Fallen Heroes Salute honoring Alabama's fallen military service members who have died since 9/11/2001

**EVENTBRITE QR CODE 5K RUN:**



**EVENTBRITE Link:**

<https://bluestarsalutefallenheroes5k2023.eventbrite.com>

**Facebook Event Link - 5K Run/Walk 1Mile Fun Run:**

[ALABAMAS FALLEN HEROES 5K RUN/WALK | Facebook](#)

**Facebook AFD/BSS Event Link:**

[ARMED FORCES DAY/BLUE STAR SALUTE | Facebook](#)

**Armed Forces Day Web Site:**

[Armed Forces Day Mobile AL](#)

Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. [Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc.](#)

**Alabama's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Blue Star Salute and Armed Forces Day Celebration**



**Memorial 5K Run/Walk  
& 1 Mile Fun Run**

**For Alabama's Fallen Heroes**

**Saturday May 20, 2023 7:30 AM Battleship Park**



**Date and Time:** 5K race will start at 7:30 AM 1 Mile will start at 7:35 AM  
**Location:** USS Alabama Battleship Park on the Causeway.  
**Benefits:** Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. ([www.bluestarsalute.org](http://www.bluestarsalute.org)) Each runner will run with the name of one of Alabama's Fallen Heroes on their Race Bib and afterwards during activities, they can visit the wall of Alabama's Faces of the Price of Freedom to see the faces of their fallen service member.  
**Distances:** Out and back certified 5K (AL 17045.E) course along the Causeway between Mobile and Spanish Fort. Fun Run is approximately 1 mile. Race starts and finishes at Battleship Park.  
**Registration:** Pre-register by mail (entries should be postmarked by May 13), in person at McCoy Outdoor, Run-N-Tri, or Fleet Feet in Mobile until noon on May 18 or online (<https://bluestarsalutefallenheroes5k2023.eventbrite.com>) until 4 AM May 19. Early packet pick-up and late registration available on Friday, May 19 from noon until 5:30 PM at the Port City Pacers office located at 338 Morgan Avenue. **Packet pick-up and race day registration at USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park from 5:30 AM - 7:15 AM.**  
**Entry fees:** Pre-registered Adult: \$20 Day of Race Adult: \$25  
 Pre-registered Youth (12 and under): \$15 Day of Race Youth: \$20  
**Blue Star Supporter:** \$15 (gets a shirt but does not run the 5K or Fun Run)  
**Upgrade:** cotton t-shirt to moisture management fabric: Add \$5  
**Shirts:** Participants registered by May 9, 2023 will be guaranteed a t-shirt in requested size on race day. Additional shirts available while supply lasts.  
**Awards:** Top male and female Overall and top three male and female in age groups: 9 and under, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, and 80+.  
**Special Activities:** Enjoy a day full of entertainment, fun and food at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park where there will be a variety of activities for everyone. Aeronautical entertainment provided by Silver Wings and others. Music provided by Alabama's 151<sup>st</sup> Army National Guard Band. Join us in honoring Alabama's Military Service members, Veterans and our Fallen Heroes. Many Veteran Service Organizations will be available for serving our military and Veterans. Day will begin with a Fallen Heroes Salute honoring Alabama's fallen military service members who died since 9/11.

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State & ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I am running/walking in honor/memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Event: 5K \_\_\_\_\_ Fun Run \_\_\_\_\_ I belong to a team: Yes No \_\_\_\_\_ Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 T-Shirt Size (circle answer): YL S M L XL XXL No Shirt (subtract \$2) Upgrade to tech fabric (add \$5)  
 I know that running a road race is a potentially hazardous activity that could cause injury or death. I should not enter and not enter if I am medically able, and by my signature I certify that I am medically able to perform this event, as in good health. I agree to waive any decision of a race official relative to any aspect of my participation in this event, including the right of any official to deny or suspend my participation for any reason whatsoever. I assume all risks associated with running or walking in this event, including but not limited to: falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather, including high heat and/or humidity, traffic and the condition of the road, all such risks to be known, and I agree to be a. I understand that bike, stroller, baby joggers, strollers, roller skates or blades, animals, and headsets/headphones/ear buds are not allowed in the race and I will abide by these guidelines. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of your accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc., the USS Alabama, their volunteers, officers, and agents, USRA Productions, all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out of my participation in this event, even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver. **Photo Release:** I agree to grant to AFD/BSS and its authorized representatives permission to use one or more photos and/or videos of my participation. I further agree that any or all of the material photographed may be used, in any form, as part of any future publications, brochures, or other printed materials used to promote AFD/BSS, and further that such use shall be without payment of fees, royalties, special credit or other compensation.  
 Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please use a blue or black ink for children under 19)

**Make checks payable to:** Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. or BSSFI  
**Mail fees and completed application to:** LRH Productions; Fallen Heroes 5K; PO Box 6976; Mobile, AL 36680



**SAVC was honored to have Chief Paul O. Prine** speak, City of Mobile Chief of Police since November 12, 2021. He is a longtime member of the Mobile Police Department. He introduced Sgt Young his assistant. Chief Prine, thanked the Veterans and told them one of his goals is Increasing engagement by building relationships with faith-based organizations and other groups which includes veterans.

## Memorial Day Ceremonies:

0700 - Flag Lowering Ceremony – Battleship Memorial Park  
0830 - Memorial Day Ceremony National Veterans Cemetery Virginia St., Mobile, AL  
1100 – Memorial Day Ceremony, Alabama State Veterans Cemetery, 225, Spanish Fort, AL



**Note:** Flag relays will also be conducted in Mobile, AL, and Pensacola, FL areas on Memorial Day. Please feel free to message me directly for details regarding these events.

[Baldwin County Memorial Day Flag Relay Run | Facebook](#)

---

## The History of Armed Forces Day

On Aug. 31, 1949, Defense Secretary Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed Forces Day to replace separate [Army](#), [Navy](#) and [Air Force](#) Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the armed forces under one agency -- the Department of Defense.

In a speech announcing the creation of the day, President Truman "praised the work of the military services at home and across the seas." He said, "It is vital to the security of the nation and to the establishment of a desirable peace."

In an excerpt from the Presidential Proclamation of Feb. 27, 1950, Truman stated:

"Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 20, 1950, marks the first combined demonstration by America's defense team of its progress, under the National Security Act, toward the goal of readiness for any eventuality. It is the first parade of preparedness by the unified forces of our land, sea, and air defense."

### BE POSITIVE

FOCUS ON THE GOOD IN ALL OTHERS,  
FIND THE POSITIVE IN OUR BROTHERS.  
WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS TO GO WRONG,  
TAKE TIME TO SING A JOYFUL SONG.  
TO ALWAYS MAKE GOOD CHOICES,  
SO THE WORLD STILL REJOICES.  
AS WHENEVER YOU FEEL DOWN,  
WITH HOPE AND JOY REBOUND.  
FORGIVENESS AND MERCY TO EXTEND  
TO ENEMY AS IF YOUR ONLY FRIEND.  
BRINGING RESENTMENT TO AN END,  
NEGATIVE ACTIONS NOW TO AMEND.

  
JOMAC - Poetry in Action

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

**May 1, 2023 – Silver Star Banner Day** – Per Congressional resolution, it is an "Official Day to honor wounded, ill, and injured Veterans".

**May 12, 2023 – Military Spouse Appreciation Day** – This date recognizes the service and sacrifices of military spouses.

**May 13, 2023 – 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 20, 2023 – 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 29, 2023 – Memorial Day** A solemn occasion to honor the men and women who died while serving in the military. [Learn more about Memorial Day here.](#)

---

## VA encourages volunteers to join cross-country march honoring Veterans, service members during 'Memorial May'

**WASHINGTON** — Between April 27 and May 29, the Department of Veterans Affairs will support a 20,000-mile march with more than 214,000 volunteers in honor of Veterans and service members.

The annual collaboration between VA's [National Cemetery Administration](#) and [Carry The Load](#) will host rallies at 38 national cemeteries along five separate routes covering 48 states. All five routes converge on Memorial Day weekend for a final rally in Dallas, Texas — the culminating event for "Memorial May." The list of national cemeteries, along with the dates and times Carry The Load marchers will visit the cemeteries, can be found [here](#).

"I can't think of a better way to prepare for Memorial Day than to spend time walking with fellow patriots, remembering those who sacrificed on our behalf," **said VA Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Matt Quinn.** "We encourage volunteers across America to join us in honoring our nation's Veterans and service members."

Those who wish to participate in a march are asked to [register with Carry The Load in advance](#). No donation is required to participate. Carry The Load is a non-profit organization providing active ways to connect Americans to the sacrifices of the nation's military, Veterans, first responders, and their families.

NCA will share video and photographs of the cemetery visits from April 27-May 27 on NCA's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

**National Montford Point Marine Association  
annual scholarship award program**

The National Montford Point Marine Association, Mobile Chapter #33 held its annual scholarship award program tonight at the Ben May Main Public Library in Mobile, Alabama. Three recipients were recognized Esther Musungu and Adrienne Stephens from Murphy High School received the Montford Point Marines Legacy scholarship. Oren Wilson, Jr. from Williamson High School receive the Gary Cooper Montford Point Marines Scholarship. The true talent of these young people was showcased tonight. They all represented Scholar, Athlete, and Leaders within their school and community



**The American Legion Department of Alabama  
Raising Funds to Restore the Alabama War Memorial  
[The Alabama War Memorial Fundraising Campaign  
\(legional.org\)](http://legional.org)**

The goal is to raise enough money to have The Alabama War Memorial and Hall of Honor completely restored. New display cases for the sketches, a new recipient sketch completed in the same style, monitors that will tell the stories, up to date ribbons and medals, and update the current statistics since Vietnam. \$225,000 is the goal. So please give and your money will go to remembering all who served.



*Dedicated to the gallant war veterans from the state of Alabama whose magnificent valor was shown in all wars.*



**A Legacy to Remember**

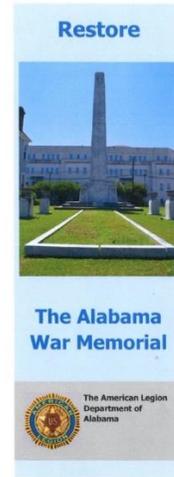
The Alabama War Memorial was dedicated in 1968 by Medal of Honor Recipient, Audie Leon Murphy, one of the most decorated American combat soldiers of World War II. Although Murphy was from Texas, Gov. George Wallace made him an honorary Alabamian for his efforts to aid the state in the war.

The Memorial included an Alabama-shaped reflecting pool. Congressional Medal of Honor fountain and pedestals that represent eight war eras: Revolutionary War, War of 1812, War Between the States, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Each pedestal once held a statue of a soldier representing the war era.

The Memorial was vandalized in the 1980's. The damaged statues were removed and replaced with planters. The statues are currently stored in the basement of the capital building to prevent any further damage. The reflecting pool and fountains were filled with dirt and sod.

The renovation project includes removing and refacing the marble, restoring the fountains and reflecting pool and restoring the light of freedom on the spire. New marble columns will be added for wars eras, such as Desert Storm, Lebanon, Grenada and today's conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. A brick memorial walk will replace the uneven sod. To help fund the restoration, citizens can purchase bricks to honor Alabama veterans. The Montgomery Garden Club has committed to restoring the gardens once all other work is completed.

The American Legion is a 501 c 19 and 501 c 3 organization (63-0008280).



120 North Jackson Street Montgomery, AL 36104

**War Memorial Walk Brick Order Forms**

Bricks will be ordered when 200 are received. Proofs will be sent before each order is placed. Please respond as quickly as possible to ensure timely processing of your orders.

[Audie Murphy - Long Lost Speech, Alabama War Memorial, 1968, Never Before Heard! - YouTube](#)

[Restore The Alabama War Memorial - The American Legion Department of Alabama \(legional.org\)](http://legional.org)



**WKRK News 5's Serving Those Who Serve**  
Cemetery Director Tony Ross, Assistant Director Joe Buschell, and the staff received the WKRK News 5's Serving Those Who Serve

**Congratulations on a job well done Tony!**

Tony Ross, director of the Alabama State Veterans Cemetery, is retiring. Tony has been the director of the cemetery since its opening in 2012.

## JOIN THE WHISKEYTOWN WARRIORS!!

The WhiskeyTown Warriors Program is an initiative created by Thom Kaz to raise awareness and funds to provide assistance to veterans that need help with mental wellness, PTSD and suicide prevention. With every purchase of a WhiskeyTown branded item or live show ticket, we will donate a portion of the proceeds to the WhiskeyTown Warriors to help these amazing individuals.

The song Outlaw in the USA is dedicated to our military, our veterans and first responders. Please feel free to share the song and thank you for supporting Thom Kaz and the WhiskeyTown Warriors in their mission to help these amazing people with mental wellness, PTSD and suicide prevention. We appreciate your support! Enjoy the song and the video now!

### Troy University

Thom was invited by the Troy University Board of Trustees President (Retired Brigadier General and Army Ranger) Gerald Dial to participate with veterans and Active-Duty Soldiers in a Veterans Appreciation Ceremony inside of Veterans Memorial Stadium. It was an incredible experience and truly an honor to have them play the video in front of 30,000 people.



### ABOUT THOM KAZ

Growing up in a military family that served in Japan, Mississippi and Florida, Thom was exposed to several different genres of music that influenced his songwriting and musical style. As a kid, Thom's father had an old reel to reel player and a collection of albums from legendary artists such as BB King, Elvis Presley, The Four Tops and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. It was those old reel to reel tapes that sparked Thom's interest in music at a very young age and, as a result, they became the foundation for his own musical journey.

WhiskeyTown is an album based on Thom's own life experiences and the stories behind the songs are just as entertaining as the songs themselves. For example, the song Outlaw in the USA is a song that talks about standing up for your rights and helping those who sacrificed to give us the freedom we enjoy today. Having a father and a brother that served over 50 years combined motivated Thom to remind our citizens that we the people have a debt to pay for the sacrifices these brave men and women gave for all of us. When you listen to that song, think about those heroes and what they did for our country.

The song Bad Man is a story about Thom meeting a homeless veteran who had lost his wife and two sons in a tragic accident, only to turn to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain. As a result, he lost everything, and when Thom met him on a side street in Las Vegas, he didn't see a bum asking for a handout. He saw a man that needed someone to simply show him some love and appreciation for what he had been through. After meeting the man and buying him lunch, some clothes and hotel room for the night, Thom remembered how grateful the man was for the opportunity to sleep in a nice, warm bed, take a shower and simply feel like someone cared about him. In Thom's own words, *"I remember the moment I gave him the key to his room at the Palace Station Hotel where I was performing on a weekly basis. As we walked through the property, he saw my show posters and asked me why someone like me would even to stop to talk to someone like him. It was a moment that I will never forget, and as we walked upstairs together, he was crying and thanking me over and over. I told him that it was me that should be thanking him for sharing his story with me. That night, he showed up at my show wearing the new clothes I had bought him, clean shaven and excited to be sitting in the front row as a VIP. I never saw him again after that day, but the feeling I got from helping him made me want to do it again. The truth is, it was he who inspired me, not the other way around. It was a life changing moment for both of us and I hope that man knows what he did for me that day was open my eyes to the struggle our veterans are facing."* It was this man's story that became the inspiration for creating the WhiskeyTown Warriors program to help our veterans by providing financial aid and support to help overcome the challenges our veterans are facing every day.

Currently, Thom is working with his management team to tour the USA to bring his music, his message and his mission to the masses. Thom has made a commitment to donate a portion of the proceeds from his live shows, WhiskeyTown Merchandise and WhiskeyTown BBQ sauce to the WhiskeyTown Warriors program to help veterans with mental wellness, PTSD and suicide prevention.

We invite you to become a part of our initiative by joining the WhiskeyTown Warriors and sharing our music and merchandise with your friends and family. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of those who need our help the most. And, if you happen to be hosting a WhiskeyTown BBQ event while listening to the album, we appreciate that too.



<https://youtu.be/PLzexxcy5hE>

[The WhiskeyTown Experience Live! @ OWA Theater in Foley, AL - May 19 2023, 8:00PM \(ilovewhiskeytown.com\)](https://www.ilovewhiskeytown.com)

**American Legion Post 76 hosted the “Tribute Bike”** which was built by Retired CW4 Ed Ricord in honor of the soldiers who lost their lives during “Black Hawk Down”.

*An Army Special Forces medic who retired as Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CW4) is searching for six Gold Star Families of the veterans who served with him in Somalia nearly 30 years ago.*

Carmen Houston, the wife of SGT Cornell Lemont Houston, Sr., was the first of the six Gold Star Families whose loved ones’ name is on the back seat to sign the bike.

Retired CW4 Ed Ricord and his wife, Laura, plan to collect signatures before presenting it to the Task Force at their 30th-anniversary reunion in October at Fort Drum, New York. He hopes to eventually donate the motorcycle to the 10th Mountain Division Museum.

Those with information about the Gold Star Families are asked to reach out to Ricord at: [mountaintracker1@gmail.com](mailto:mountaintracker1@gmail.com).

For more information and updates about the tribute bike, visit the [Facebook page](#).

“We’ll take it anywhere... we would like to bring it to them,” said Ricord. “But the six Gold Star Families that are on the back seat – they are the priority.” Said Ricord

SGT Cornell Lemont Houston, Sr.  
Unit: 10th Mountain, 41st Engineer (QRF) Age: 31  
Home Town: Mobile, AL Died On: 10/06/1993  
Cornell Houston joined the Army, originally as a reservist, after graduating high school in Mobile, Alabama. SGT Houston spent a decade in service to his country as a combat engineer.

Retired CW4 Ed Ricord was deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia, with American troops and the United Nations on a peacekeeping mission, known as Operation Restore Hope, which included famine relief efforts. On Sept. 25, 1993, then Special Forces medic SFC. Ricord, along with the 10th Mountain Division’s Task Force 2-14 UN Quick Reaction Company, rushed to a helicopter crash site on a search and rescue mission. A Black Hawk helicopter – call sign Courage 53 – had been shot down along with five crew members.

“We put the remains in a body bag... About that time, it went sideways and upside down. We started taking fire from everywhere,” said Ricord.

An intense firefight ensued as soldiers defended the crash site from Somali militiamen attacking with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire.

As quickly as the battle started, the mission to defend Courage 53 would also soon be forgotten and

overshadowed by the Battle of Mogadishu that occurred on Oct. 3, 1993.

The famed Task Force Ranger and Delta Force battle of Oct. 3 would be notarized in the book and movie, Black Hawk Down. Those who served in Operation Gothic Serpent would also get medal upgrades in 2021, but the men of Task Force 2-14 never received any fanfare despite serving the same mission and braving the same dangers.

“The guys of Task Force 2-14 got no recognition,” said Ricord. “Forgotten Bastards... that is what we called each other when no one recognized us.”

The soldiers were lost in history, but not for long.

Ricord’s love and respect for his fellow soldiers can be seen in the small details that are embellished throughout the bike – right down to the hand-engraved unit mottos and the wrapping that now immortalizes Task Force 2-14. Ricord said the camouflage is chocolate chip... it’s a six-color carving pattern and that’s what they wore in Somalia.

Now, Ricord’s newfound mission is to locate Task Force 2-14 veterans and six Gold Star Family members to have them sign the bike on a special spot reserved just for them:

PVT David J. Conner / SGT Ferdinan C. Richardson  
SGT Eugene Williams / PFC Matthew K. Anderson  
SGT Cornell I. Houston / PFC James Henry Martin Jr.



1993 Harley Davidson FLH Electric Glide Ultra Classic

[Army veteran dedicates 1993 tribute bike to Gold Star Families | FOX21 News Colorado](#)

During the Battle of Mogadishu, Houston was part of the Quick Reaction Force rescue convoy that went in to secure downed Blackhawk helicopters and save pinned-down Rangers. He was wounded by gunfire and shrapnel on October 3, sustaining chest and other internal injuries, and died on October 6 in the Landstuhl Army Regional Medical Center in Germany. Houston has been honored posthumously with the Purple Heart medal, the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device for valor, and de Fleury Medal.

*Houston is buried in the Veterans National Cemetery, Mobile, AL*

**SAVC presented grants to the following at the April meeting:**



Tanya Butler-Team River Runner



John Kilpatrick -H2O



Fight Oar Die, Bryant Knight



Mayor Dow spoke at the State Board of

Veterans Affairs Headquarters about the issues of mental health in veterans specifically opioids, some alternative treatments, and some of the great stuff VRR is doing. The state has a \$350 million dollar settlement some of which should be granted to veterans

Mike Dow gave a follow-up on what is going on with the effort.

Dave Riley reported on how he has been able to get off opioids.

**American Legion Auxiliary** – first Tuesday of every month they will be at the VA Clinic in Mobile selling hotdogs to Veterans there on that day.

**Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs** – Commissioner Kent Davis reported Linda Jenkins, District Manager effective May 1, moving to Headquarters in Montgomery as District Manager of quality assurance. Will be hiring someone for her position here in Mobile.

## OATH OF ENLISTMENT Battleship Memorial Park



Young men and women take the first step in their military careers. The newest members of the US Military got their start in Mobile Saturday. Several students took the Oath of Enlistment. Some see this as carrying on a long family tradition.

Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year Lt Col Robert Frank Barrow, USA (Ret), Director of Army Instruction MCPSS, JROTC Program, spoke of his experiences while serving in the military and encouraged the enlistees to always have a positive attitude.

Col Patrick H. Downing, USA (Retired), USS Alabama Battleship Commission. While a recruit might be expected to be nervous, Col. Downing described the moment of enlistment as a moment of great clarity: "It is a moment when one makes a commitment to support and defend the Constitution," he said.

"Every veteran can recall that moment," says Dr. Barry Booth. "It is a pivotal moment in our lives."

Welcome by Aubrey Fuller, Battleship Commission, USA Vietnam Veteran; presentation of Colors, US Armed Forces Honor Guard; J. Porter Buschell led the Pledge; Monica Cosson, Spanish Fort Presbyterian Church, sang the National Anthem; introduction of Guest Speaker, Terry Ankerson, Chairman, USS Alabama Battleship Commission.

**DERBY**  
at the  
*Pillars*

Join us for the  
149<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Derby  
May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 | 4:00pm-8:30pm

To benefit Veteran Mental Health Initiatives  
We will watch the Derby via live stream  
Derby food | Bottomless champagne & a cash bar  
Live music | Raffle | Games along the front lawn

A special thanks to our Finish Line Sponsor:  
Gardberg & Kemmerly, Attorneys at Law

PILLARS MOBILE | 1757 GOVERNMENT STREET | MOBILE, AL 36605

IT'S BIG HATS AND EVEN BIGGER HEARTS AS WE RAISE MONEY FOR VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH AT THE 2023 "DERBY AT THE PILLARS" FUNDRAISER EVENT. GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

FIGHT OAR DIE  
USVETROW.ORG

For tickets, go to [eventbrite.com/e/derby-at-the-pillars-tickets-57748797067](https://eventbrite.com/e/derby-at-the-pillars-tickets-57748797067)  
Or Scan the QR code to the right

Tickets include Derby-inspired food, bottomless champagne, and two drink tickets. All money raised benefits Veterans Mental Health Initiatives by Fight Oar Die, which is a 501(c)(3).

**DERBY AT THE PILLARS - It's big hats and even bigger hearts as we help raise money for Veterans Mental Health Initiatives by Fight Oar Die at the 2023 "Derby at the Pillars" fundraiser.**

**May 6, 4pm – 8:30 pm**  
**149<sup>TH</sup> Kentucky Derby streamed live**  
**Food, bottomless champagne, cash bar live music, raffles, games on the front lawn.**

Tickets available on Eventbrite: [Derby at the Pillars](https://eventbrite.com/e/derby-at-the-pillars-tickets-57748797067)

Say hello to 2023 Fight Oar Die team of RANGERS! This team includes Joe Leach, Guy Phillips, Dave Figgins, and Craig Foreman. Come out and support them on their arduous task to raise awareness of Veterans Suicide.

**Mission:**

- 1) Establish community-centered safety nets to support and intervene with those experiencing mental health challenges and crises (through training people in Mental Health First Aid and through providing scholarship for those who are committed to working with Veterans mental health).
  - 2) Send teams of all US Veterans to participate in extreme challenges to stand as examples of reaching one's own potential.
- Fight Oar Die was the first-ever all US veteran rowing team to race across the Atlantic Ocean completing it in 54 days. The second year, 50 days. We intend to put four different veterans in the boat each year. We champion organizations that are doing the work helping veterans achieve their potential; inspiring them to stop taking their lives and start living them

[Derby at the Pillars Tickets, Sat, May 6, 2023 at 4:00 PM | Eventbrite](https://eventbrite.com/e/derby-at-the-pillars-tickets-57748797067)  
[West Herr's Fight Oar Die Team Tells Their Story | Facebook](#)

**Guinness World Record**

Cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy recently broke the Guinness World Record for the most people to simultaneously perform pushups, academy officials confirmed to Military Times.

It took 2,926 cadets, officers, trainers and other academy personnel to complete the challenge on April 20. Their accomplishment breaks the [previous record](#) of 1,645 people set in 2017.



  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual  
★ ★ Military ★ ★  
Appreciation Lunch

Wednesday, May 3  
12 - 1:30 p.m.

USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park  
Aircraft Pavilion | Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

- 🍷 Veterans: \$50
- 🍷 Members: \$50
- 🍷 General Admission: \$75

★★★★★

Awards presented by the Mobile Chamber and military organizations  
with recognition of distinguished ROTC & JROTC Cadets

Presented by:  
Atlas Industrial Outsourcing




  
**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.

MOBILE MEMORIAL  
GARDENS CEMETERY  
MEMORIALIZING MEMORIES<sup>®</sup>



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



## South Alabama Veterans Council

### April 18, 2023 Meeting

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Lou Lartigue called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. by— 47 in attendance - Location Saucy Q BBQ

**OPENING PRAYER:** Pat Downing opened the meeting with prayer.

**PLEDGE:** Jim Jeffries led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**WELCOME:** Lou Lartigue welcomed everyone, and recognized distinguished guests.

Chief Prine, MPD thanked the Veterans, said a few words, and introduced Sgt Young his assistant.

**MINUTES:** Minutes for the March meeting were mailed in the newsletter. Seven snail mail newsletters and 435 emailed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Tom Schwarz, hat collected \$61.00. Three checks were received from Mobile Memorial Gardens totaling \$90.00.

**GRANTS:** Presented to Tanya Butler-Team River Runner, John Kilpatrick -H2O, Fight Oar Die, Todd Morrison-American Legion Post 250 military bundles for May.

**MEMORIAL DAY:** Flag Raising at BMP, ceremonies at various cemeteries.

**MEMORIAL DAY FLAG RELAY:** Admiral Lee, the run is from Mobile to Pensacola, 15<sup>th</sup> year.

**VSO Report - Jim Jeffries,** Post 76 – Saturday, 1:00 pm, 29 April 2023, hosting a Gold Star Mother and family. Her son was killed in Somalia, and one of his comrades in arms who did survive will be there, open to the public.

**Alabama War Memorial** – the only one official for the state of Alabama, sits on North Jackson St in Montgomery on American Legion Property next to Headquarters Building. Dedicated in 1967 by Audi Murphy, the most decorated soldier in WWII. Deteriorated over the years, maintained by American Legion. Will take \$224,000.00 to restore it. American Legion, State of Alabama donated \$30,000.00 to begin that effort. Seeking funds from various organizations, went to the legislature asking for their support.

Pat Downing reported MOAA donated \$1000.00, and bricks are being sold to help raise money for restoration.

**American Legion Auxiliary** – first Tuesday of every month they will be at the VA Clinic in Mobile selling hotdogs to Veterans there on that day.

**Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs** – Commissioner Kent Davis reported today is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first internment at the cemetery in Spanish Fort.

Linda Jenkins, District Manager effective May 1, moving to Headquarters in Montgomery as District Manager of quality assurance. Will be hiring someone for her position here in Mobile.

Mayor Dow spoke at the State Board of Veterans Affairs Headquarters about the issues of mental health in veterans specifically opioids, some alternative treatments, and some of the great stuff VRR is doing. The state has a \$350 million dollar settlement some of which should be granted to veterans

Mike Dow gave a follow-up on what is going on with the effort. Dave Riley reported on how he has been able to get off opioids.

**Veterans Recovery Resources:** John Kilpatrick reported on the grand opening of the inpatient facility on Veterans Day, 2023.

**AMERICAN LEGION POST 250:** Todd Morrison, Honor Guard Chaplain – asked for donations for bundles of articles to be given to active military members and veterans, and reported on other activities at the post.

**USS ALABAMA:** Pat Downing reported on the progress of the teak deck. BMP Now has an education staff of 4 people working on “Anchor Academy” established to teach students from grades 1-6 about military history. Spanish Fort Veterans Cemetery: 3532 internments, 4431 pre-registered

**JOB FAIR:** Lisa Owen reported on the job fair on April 20, Fort Whiting

**MEMORIAL DAY:** Flag Raising at BMP, ceremonies at various cemeteries.

**MEMORIAL DAY FLAG RELAY:** Admiral Lee, the run is from Mobile to Pensacola, 15<sup>th</sup> year

**JROTC:** Col Frank Barrow reported on the new JROTC program for middle schools.

**VETERANS CLINIC – TILLMAN'S CORNER:** Tammy Blackmore, Social Worker, reported on programs covered by the VA.

**DAV:** Joe Dec reported they are still looking for a location for meetings. Encouraged people to join the DAV Auxiliary.

**IN MEMORY OF COL JOHN NEW:** Col New passed away Saturday, served as president of SAVC 2008 – 2010, was Squad leader in the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade in Vietnam, Purple Heart Recipient, later commissioned as an officer in US Army, also in US Customs Service for 30 years. He will be buried in his home state of PA.

The meeting adjourned at 0945

Fran Barber  
Secretary, SAVC  
April 28, 2023