



South Alabama Veterans Council

*A Coalition of Veterans, Friends, and Organizations working
Together to Further the Cause of Veterans in the South Alabama Area*

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251-751-6619

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251-391-8176

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251-442-4349



The South Alabama Veterans Council was established in 1998 by Col Glenn Frazier and other Veterans in the Mobile Area. The first meeting was held in the Denton-Drake American Legion Post 88. Welcome Back.

Denton-Drake American Legion Post 88



Fellow Veterans!

We had a fantastic turnout last month with over 80 participants...our mayoral candidates did a great job sharing their ideas on what they hope to do for the City of Mobile. I wish each of them the best of luck in the months ahead! Hopefully, we will have had a super Armed Forces Day ceremony on May 17 at Battleship Memorial Park...since I have to turn in my newsletter input early, I want to thank in advance everyone who has worked hard to make this year's ceremony special. Also, a big shoutout to Brandon McFarland and Phil Quigley for hosting the Devoted Coining Ceremony at Battleship Park...I had the chance to speak to the veterans in attendance, where each veteran received a beautiful challenge coin. Special thanks to Devoted Health and Sage Health, along with additional supporters, for sponsoring this event.

For this month's meeting at American Legion Post 88 on 20 May, we will have David Blair from the

University of South Alabama Office of Military Services share with us the many benefits offered to veterans who attend the university. A retired Sergeant Major, we are blessed to have David as part of our SAVC team. I anticipate another great turnout to hear what he has to offer. Our next big event is the Memorial Day ceremonies taking place across both Mobile and Baldwin Counties on 26 May. Our own Pete Riehm will be the master of ceremonies at the National Veterans Cemetery off Virginia Street early on that Monday...he will also host the ceremony at the Alabama State Memorial Veterans Cemetery later that morning. I will be hosting a flag raising ceremony at Battleship Memorial Park and later serve as a guest speaker at the William F. Green Veterans Home Memorial Day Ceremony. We hope you can join at least one of these events as we pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep our nation free. See you in May!

Robert "Frank" Barrow
LTC (US Army Retired)
President, South Alabama Veterans Council





GREETINGS!

It's "Take a loss";
Read Philippians 3:7
"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for CHRIST."

Most times, when we hear the term "take a loss," we think in a negative way because we're losing something. However, when it comes to Jesus versus the world, taking a loss is an excellent thing. The Bible says, "What profit a man if you gain the whole world, but lose your soul?". So, on the contrary, we want to lose the whole world and gain our soul. So don't be afraid to take a loss when it comes to the things of the world. The win-win and the profit is Jesus Christ, Amen!

Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin,
Chaplain SAVC



May 20 SAVC Meeting Guest Speaker

Sergeant Major Blair, USA, Director, Office of Military Services, will be the guest speaker at the May 20 meeting of the South Alabama Veterans Council. David Blair, a retired U.S. Army sergeant major, leads the new Office of Military Services at the University of South Alabama.

The University of South Alabama is expanding its support for active-duty members of the U.S. military, their dependents, and veterans through the new Office of Military Services. The office is led by David Blair, a retired U.S. Army sergeant major with over 18 years of experience leading similar programs at the University of Alabama and Mississippi State University. Blair joined the USA on Sept. 1, 2024.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For More Information Contact:
Robert Shawn Davidson
South Alabama Veterans Council
985-264-3471

PRESS RELEASE South Alabama Veterans Council Plans Armed Forces Day Events

The South Alabama Veterans Council, with the support of the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park will hold its annual Armed Forces Day Celebration on Saturday, May 17, 2025, at the USS ALABAMA Memorial Park, 2703 Battleship Memorial Parkway.

The Armed Forces Day event will honor those who serve, have served, and have fallen in military service. The event will start at 8:30 am in the Aircraft Pavilion with an EXPO of VSOs and other Vendors. The Expo will feature displays by military organizations and vendor tables for visitors to explore and learn about various products and services available.

The Armed Forces Day Ceremony will begin at 9:30 am, featuring keynote speaker U.S. Representative Barry Moore (AL-01), following the Armed Forces Day Ceremony, the families of all those service men and women who have lost their lives in military service will receive recognition in a Gold Star Ceremony.

Following the Gold Star Ceremony, there will be a parachute performance by the Silver Wings The Parachute Team from Ft. Benning, GA, and an MRE Cook-off will be held outside, where teams from local VSOs, the Military, First Responder teams, and others will compete. Food trucks will be available for those looking to eat on-site.

For more information, visit their website: savc.info/armed-forces-day



US Representative Barry Moore

Armed Forces Day Event - Guest Speaker

Born and raised on a family farm in Coffee County, Alabama, Barry Moore is a veteran, small business owner, and former member of the Alabama State House.

After high school, Barry joined the Alabama National Guard and Reserves, serving for six years. During that time, he also pursued a degree in Agricultural Science at Auburn University, and joined the Auburn ROTC Army Ranger Challenge Team.

Barry's first job out of college was in the animal pharmaceutical industry, but Barry returned to his hometown of Enterprise to start Hopper-Moore Inc., an industrial waste hauling company, which has also been an Alabama general contractor for more than two decades.

In 2010, Barry was recruited to run for the Alabama State House to represent District 91 and served for eight years, including as Chairman of the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and Vice-Chair of the Small Business and Commerce Committee.

Barry and his wife and business partner, Heather, are the proud parents of four children - Jeremy (married to Brittany), Kathleen (married to 1LT Jack Whitfield), Claudia, and Jeb. They are active members of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Enterprise.

OUR ARMED FORCES DAY HOSTS



OUR ARMED FORCES DAY SPONSORS



OUR ARMED FORCES DAY INKIND SPONSORS



OUR ARMED FORCES DAY VENDORS



Jennifer Byrd and the MRE committee



REGISTER ONLINE FOR THE MRE COOKOFF



MRE Sign Up!

SILVER WINGS
DEMONSTRATION
10:30 a.m.

Established in 1965, the Silver Wings is a parachute demonstration team whose roots date back to 1958, when members of the Airborne-Air Mobility Command founded it. The team's primary mission is to represent the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE), 1/107th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) Airborne School and the U.S. Army by showcasing the freefall capabilities of contemporary airborne forces. The Silver Wings are based at Fort Moore, GA.

MEALS READY TO EAT
MRE CONTEST

11:00 a.m.

The MRE Cook-off will be held outside, where teams from local VSOs National Guard Reserve Units, Anyone can compete.

JUDGING BY
Local Chefs

HONORARY JUDGE AND HOST
Elbert Wingfield, USMC
Saucy Q BBQ
MEALS READY TO EAT



Judging:
Chef Pete Blohme
Operating partner and co-owner of PP Hospitality Group



Judging:
Chef Nick DiMario
Operating partner and co-owner of PP Hospitality Group



Judging:
Chef Frankie Little
Roosters



Judging:
Kelly Finley
News Director / News Anchor



Judging:
Chef Tony Sawyer
Bob's Downtown Diner

VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

ARMED FORCES DAY

Battleship Memorial Park Aircraft Pavilion

May 17, 2025

EXPO

BOOTHS ARE FREE TO VSO's

Table and chairs provided by Battleship Memorial Park

Space is limited – make your reservations now @
armedforcesdaymobile@gmail.com

2703 Battleship Pkwy, Mobile, AL 36602

Hosted by
South Alabama Veterans Council & Battleship Memorial Park





South Alabama Veterans Council

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

**MOPH Department of Alabama's Commander
Andrew Del Gaudio, MOPH Chapter 2206**



Executive Director Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz Center for Leadership – University of West Florida

Dr. Del Gaudio is a retired Marine Corps infantry officer with a distinguished 26-year career. He served combat deployments in Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan during his extensive service. His personal awards include the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," the Purple Heart, and the Combat Action Ribbon. He held positions of tactical-level leadership to teaching positions at The Basic School, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the Baltic Defense College. He has also served in strategic-level staff positions in the Pentagon as a strategic planner, military advisor, and foreign area expert on the Middle East and Eurasia.

Dr. Del Gaudio is passionate about teaching leadership; specifically, character education, analytical and recognition decision making and leading change management in highly technological environments. He is a published author on subjects ranging from the art of war to leadership at the strategic level. His work has been used to support teaching and research objectives in military and civilian education alike. He served on several boards supporting veterans, has received numerous leadership awards and enjoys assisting his fellow veterans through the Military Order of the Purple Heart with his wife and three children.

Dr. Del Gaudio graduated from Villanova University in 1997 with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He then graduated from Marine Corps University's prestigious

School of Advanced Warfighting in 2010 with a master's degree in Operational Studies. He received his Doctorate in History from the University of Liverpool in 2012.

VETERANS IN LEADERSHIP



The 1st annual Veterans in Leadership Conference will begin with registration at 8 a.m., the program at 9 a.m., and the conference will run until 1 p.m. **on 15 May 2025 at the UWF Conference Center (BLDG 22).** We will have coffee and a continental breakfast available.

What to Expect:

Veteran transition from the military back to society has become a major issue in our country and our region in particular, as we have one of the largest concentration of Veterans of any area in the Nation. When Veterans, who have often suffered from years of combat, return home and leave the military, the weight of their new lives can often be overwhelming, as being a parent, earning a living, and bettering themselves professionally come together. It can lead to poor performance, substance abuse, or worse. Transitioning properly into the workforce or the classroom takes deliberate effort, but you need help from those around you to get you there responsibly. Developing an understanding of the challenges is key.

The Veterans in Leadership Conference will first help the audience understand the road Veterans take when they return from combat to service and from service to society and the workforce/classroom through a keynote speech presented by Andrew Del Gaudio.

A panel of three combat veterans will then talk about their experiences of combat back to society, the challenges they faced, and how they overcame their issues to lead other Veterans and their families through the paths they learned. Next, a group of Veteran employers will talk about how they used their experiences in the service to help fellow Veterans and families come into the workforce, and how they developed highly effective "teams of teams" in their businesses. Elizebeth Rasnick, of the UWF Center for Cybersecurity, will round out the conference with a presentation on the educational programs being offered free of charge to Veterans, to prepare them for a career in today's cyber workforce.

The Conference will conclude with a presentation to the Dean of the Lewis Bear Jr. College of Business with a Proclamation naming it a "Purple Heart College." Jason Crawford, a fellow Purple Heart Recipient and UWF alumnus, will assist Del Gaudio in this duty. This presentation will be followed by a complimentary buffet lunch.

Join Us **The Waterfront** Live Music

1 YACHT CLUB DRIVE, DAPHNE, ALABAMA 36526 • (251) 626-9329

WARRIOR LEGACY RANCH FUNDRAISER

STARS AND STRIPES PARTY

THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

VIP HOUR IS 5:30-6:30 • EVENT IS 6:30-8:30

Raffles Prizes Awards Chef Inspired Food • Drinks

VIP TICKETS \$100 • EVENT TICKETS \$50 • CORPORATE TABLE \$900/TABLE OF 6

PROCEEDS GO TO HELP BUILD THE GULF COAST VETERANS COMMUNITY CENTER ON WARRIOR LEGACY RANCH

WARRIORLEGACYRANCH.ORG

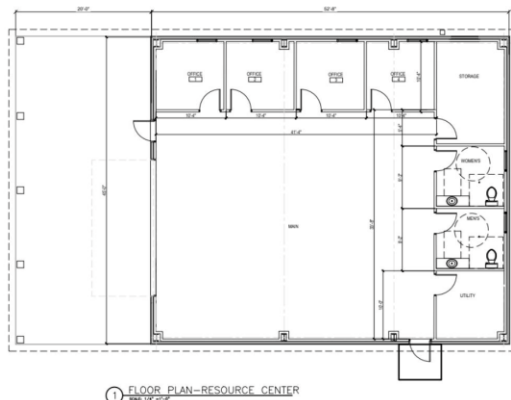
SCAN TO BUY TICKETS

CALL 251.626.9329 FOR MORE DETAILS!!

PR FOUNDATION DOING YOUR SPECIAL THING FOR YOUR SPECIAL PEOPLE

CHARITABLE

Floorplans completed by **BES-Incorporated** in Fairhope. Here are the preliminary drawings and elevations for both the **Gulf Coast Veterans Community Resource Center at WLR** and the **Warrior Legacy Ranch Reunion Center**.



⓪ FLOOR PLAN-RESOURCE CENTER



THE STARS AND STRIPS PARTY

May 15, 2025

1 Yacht Club Drive, Daphne, AL

The PR Foundation, with the support of the Waterfront Dahne, will host a Fundraising event in support of Warrior Legacy Ranch on Thursday evening, May 15, 2025, VIP hour 5:30 – 6:30 pm, EVENT 6:30 – 8:30 pm, location 1 Yacht Club Drive, Daphne, AL. Warrior Legacy Ranch is honored to partner with the Baldwin County Home Builders Association and Panini Pete for this dinner!

“THE STARS AND STRIPS PARTY”

Interview with Nick DiMario on FM106.5

[Scuttlebutt Radio Network 04/2... - FM Talk 1065 Podcasts - Apple Podcasts](#)

WATERFRONT RESTAURANT - DAPHNE

We were beyond thrilled to present 2 donation checks last night! Waterfront's featured charity for January at Bingo Night was Warrior Legacy Ranch

info@warriorlegacyranch.org.

The community raised \$550 for this great cause we are supporting!



Pete Blohm, Nick DiMario, Patrick Jump

Battleship Memorial Park will be purchasing two Vietnam War statues to be placed near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Mobile, AL.

Donations for the purchase of the statues will be accepted. Please send all donations to:

USS Alabama Foundation
PO Box 65, Mobile AL 36601

Also, on your checks, write the following on the check:

For the support of the USS Alabama Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The USS Alabama Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) organization. If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Patrick H. Downing
Colonel, US Army (Retired)



The sculpture's 3 soldiers represent the diversity of the US military by including a Caucasian, African American, and Latino American whose service branch is intentionally ambiguous. Together, they face the Wall of the fallen.



The Vietnam Women's Memorial is a memorial dedicated to the nurses and women of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. It depicts three uniformed women with a wounded male soldier to symbolize the support and caregiving roles that women played in the war as nurses and other specialists

LECTURES & SYMPOSIA
Asian Division & Veteran's History Project

**Unveiling Secret War Laos:
Tales from US Allied Lao
veterans and the CIA during
the Vietnam War**

May 9, 2025
3:00-4:30 p.m. EDT
Library of Congress,
Thomas Jefferson Building,
Whittall Pavilion (LJ-WH),
10 First Street SE
Washington, DC 20540
Metro Stop: Capitol South
(Orange/Blue/Silver Lines)

Veterans from Secret War Laos recall their experiences during the Vietnam War. Laos was a key battlefield in the conflict as the Ho Chi Minh Trail transited it. Lao Special Guerrilla Unit/Royal Lao Army soldiers fought along the Trail, serving in large unit/covert actions, allied with US CIA officers, advisors and U.S. Army Special Forces. Join us as we hear directly from participants of this little-known story of the war.

Panelists:
Lieutenant Tony Thiravong, Lao SGU/RLA
Major Chanto Vorasam, Lao SGU/RLA
Thomas Leo Briggs, CIA case officer
James K. Bruton, U.S. Army Special Forces
Colonel Khao Insiengmay, Lao SGU/RLA
Osa Phiangdaee Gilstrap, daughter, Lao SGU/RLA
Susan Boet Caclo, Applied Anthropologist

* This is a hybrid event. No registration is required to attend the in-person event.
* To attend virtually, register at <https://www.loc.gov/secret-war-laos>
#1542 / unveiling-secret-war-laos-tales-from-us-allied-lao-veterans-and-the-cia-during-the-vietnam-war-0509-25

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Ryan Wolfson-Ford (twolfsonford@loc.gov)
Tien Doan (tdoa@loc.gov)

Request ADA accommodations 5 days in advance at 202-707-6362 or ADA@loc.gov



Lao SGU/RLA soldiers in the field.

LIBRARY
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

UNVEILING SECRET WAR LAOS:

Don't miss an upcoming panel on May 9 featuring veterans of the Secret War in Laos speaking about their experiences during the Vietnam War.

Laos was a key battlefield as the Ho Chi Minh Trail transited the country. Lao Special Guerrilla Unit/Royal Lao Army soldiers fought along this bloody road, serving as "Road Watch" teams and in large unit actions. Former US CIA case officers and veterans of the U.S. Army Special Forces will also be speaking.

Due to the covert nature of the war in Laos and US involvement, historical documentation has been limited, especially in terms of personal narratives. This panel lets you hear directly from participants of this little-known but crucial story of the Vietnam War 50 years after its end. This event will be held both in person at the Thomas Jefferson building and Whittall Pavilion and simultaneously online via Zoom. There will be time for questions from the audience at the end of the session. Register at

https://loc.zoomgov.com/.../reg.../WN_hjbOnLzARnS-xfT92VXdvw

HISTORY OF THE USA

MEMORIALS ON DISPLAY,
FOR ALL TO SEE EACH DAY.
TO NEVER TO BE PUT ASIDE,
NOR BE IGNORED OR TO HIDE.

EACH TO TEACH OUR HISTORY,
OF FREE SPEECH AND LIBERTY.
A LESSON TO UNDERSTAND,
THE STORIES OF OUR LAND.

Joe Mc Carthy
JOMAC - POETRY IN Stone

MEMORIAL DAY FLAG RELAY - Alabama Gulf Coast Region - MONDAY 26 May 2025

To reserve your opportunity to participate as a running/jogging "Flag Carrier" for a one-mile leg along our designated 22-mile route, contact:

Endel Lee

(251) 649-1430/cell

Email: endellee@yahoo.com.

Advanced registration will occur from 15-30 APRIL, and then we will open registration to the general public on 01 MAY 2025.

RunSignUp will be the registration program we will use to process registration for each participant. There is NO COST to register -- just a commitment of your time & a promise to contact me ASAP, if your plans to participate change. We are also using the *MyWay APP* to assist you in selecting the particular mile you want to run/jog. Details about these new tools are available via the Memorial Day Flag Relay - Mobile, AL Facebook group page. Please follow this page to see periodic updates as we approach this Memorial Day Flag Relay, or call me anytime with any questions or suggestions.

www.facebook.com/groups/433558806694852

Memorial Day Flag Relay



**Monday,
May 26, 2025**

Volunteers Needed

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

3 Central Gulf Coast Region Routes

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

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

Starters' Ceremony: 0645-0700am, then relay

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

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

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

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

AMERICAN LEGION
501(c)(3)

2nd Annual Bicycle Ride to National Convention for PTSD

benefiting the Birdwell Foundation

SCAN HERE

<https://americanlegion501.com/bicycle-ride-for-ptsd>

Dallas, TX to Tampa Bay, FL **Aug. 2 - 22, 2025**

Support our 1245 Mile ride to raise ONE Million Dollars.

Your donations will support the treatment for our veterans and first responders across the U.S. and the future home of the 1st ever Women's PTSD facility.

Q & A sessions will be held at all 6 branches of the Armed Forces during the ride to spread awareness about PTSD and available services.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 511 BICYCLE DRIVE – Dallas to Tampa August 2 – 22, 2025

The CPOA Mobile is planning an event for August 10th at USCG Sector Mobile to benefit the American Legion's Post 511 bicycle drive. The drive consists of the members of AL Post 511 riding bicycles from Rowlett, TX, to their National Convention to be held in Tampa, FL, this year. They did the drive last year to their convention in New Orleans and raised \$21,000 towards their "Be the One" and the Birdwell Foundation.

This year, they chose the USCG Sector Mobile as one of the military facilities they wanted to visit on their route and asked the CPOA to be their local POC. Their goal is to raise \$1 million. I am reaching out to all of you to request your assistance with planning and participation, respectfully. Some of the things we would welcome assistance with are the following:

- Fundraising (Ex, We are planning a ride-along from the State Line to Sector Mobile and charging a signup fee to donate to the cause)
- Media Requests
- Passing the word to other Vet Orgs.
- Planning with City

To participate or support the event, contact:
Pablo J. Rosa-Perez, CPOA President
mobilechapterpresidentcpoa@gmail.com



MOBILE BAY AREA VETERANS COMMISSION



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This was a year of multiple **"Firsts" for the Veterans Commission**. Thanks to the team, I cannot express enough; they helped us make this a foundational year as we aligned our strategy and vision for the Veterans Commission. Here's a quick snapshot of the changes we put into action:

Name Change—The "Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission" no longer focuses solely on Veterans Day. Our name aligns with our goals to support all Veteran organizations and events throughout the year. This name change is not symbolic but designed to appeal to a broader audience on both sides of the bay and help build awareness on behalf of all veteran organizations.

Veterans Day Parade – After many long hours of coordination with the City of Mobile, we designed a new marshaling area and parade route that accommodated significantly larger participation than we have ever had. We saw over 1000 middle and high school students from 6 Mobile County bands and 13 ROTC units. Our new marshaling area and parade route was facilitated by the first tented "parade command post" to help centralize coordination. Coupled with four golf carts and much improved walk-talkie communication, we were able to adjust rapidly and safely to the quickly changing weather.

Honors Luncheon – This is the centerpiece of our efforts to showcase our Patriot and Veteran of the Year and, more importantly, bring local businesses closer to Veterans in our community. We fully automated our ticket sales with the Mobile Chamber's software and found it much easier to track our weekly sales for our luncheon Vendor Namans. We have seen a steady increase in business sponsorship over the last 5 years, and as a result, we are seeing an increase in businesses

attending this event. In the past, we found that the old-style mess hall tables provided by Ft Whiting made it challenging to sit businesses alongside our Veterans. For the first time, we rented round tables, and the difference was remarkable. We plan to continue with this round table format as we work to improve our mixed seating for the luncheon.

Parade of Flags – We had another remarkable year with over 24 schools from Mobile and Baldwin Counties and over 114 students participating in the Veterans Day essay contest. Our success stemmed from our efforts to build a relationship with both Baldwin and Mobile County School Superintendents, who actively promoted this program. Consequently, we had standing room only in the Aircraft Pavilion when the Distinguished Young Woman of America, Alicia Chu, spoke, and our essay winners read their essays.

Veteran of the Year nominations for the 2025 Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year (VOY) will be accepted by the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission from August 1 to August 22, 2025. The letter must be postmarked no later than midnight on August 22, 2025. The veteran's cell phone number and mailing address must be included with the nomination. The Veteran of the Year Committee will meet the following week and will select the VOY.



MOBILE BAY AREA VETERAN OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

Veteran of the Year nominations for the 2025 Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year (VOY) will be accepted by the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission, from August 1 to August 22, 2025. Letter must be postmarked no later than midnight August 22, 2025. The veteran's cell phone number and mailing address must be with the nomination. The Veteran of the Year Committee will meet the following week and will select the VOY.

Award Criteria:

1. Must be a resident of the Mobile Bay Area, which includes Mobile and Baldwin Counties of Alabama.
2. Must be a living veteran of one of the six armed forces of the United States, including Reserve and National Guard, or the United States Merchant Marine.
3. Must have demonstrated outstanding patriotism, leadership, and selfless service and, also served as a volunteer in community or civic service.
4. May be awarded for a single act or for continuous service.
5. May not be a previous recipient of the Mobile Bay Veteran of the Year Award.
6. A DD-214 or other proof of service must be submitted with the nomination.

The award will be presented at the Honors Luncheon on Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11, 2025.

The nomination will be valid for three years.

Nominations should be mailed to:

Col. Steve Carey, Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission
P.O. Box 2187
Mobile, AL 36652

The Military Appreciation Luncheon

The committee recognizes all branches of the military community, both active and retired. Awards and special recognition are presented to distinguished JROTC & ROTC cadets, as well as the General Gary Cooper Award presented by Keesler Federal Credit Union.

GEN. GARY COOPER OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

The General Gary Cooper Outstanding Service Award is given to a current or former military service member who inspires others by living out the values we see in Major General Cooper, including achievement, courage, excellence, and humility.

Major General Janet Cobb is the 2025 General Gary Cooper Outstanding Service Award recipient. She is a pioneering leader whose 42-year military career and continued civic service exemplify dedication and excellence. Commissioned in 1978 after graduating as a Distinguished Military Graduate from the University of Alabama ROTC program, she became the university's first female general officer.



LTC Robert Frank Barrow, USA (Ret)
MG Janet L. Cobb, USA (Ret.)



Outstanding Army JROTC C/Col Hannah D. Watson, Alma Bryant High School

The University of South Alabama Army ROTC Cadet of the Year Award recognizes a cadet who has shown exemplary leadership skills throughout the year and is a model cadet.



Army ROTC Cadet of the Year: Cadet Caleb Cooper
Air Force ROTC Cadet of the Year: Cadet Lucas Madden



The following Junior ROTC Cadets were also recognized from each of their schools:

Accel Academy – Cadet Darrian Carrio
Baker High School – Cadet Kierston Campbell
Blount High School – Cadet Harmonee Phelon
Bryant High School – Cadet Hannah D. Watson
Chickasaw High School – Cadet Isabelle Smith
Citronelle High School – Cadet Zoey Back
Davidson High School – Cadet Ayden Ezell
LeFlore High School – Cadet Jaylene Brandon
Montgomery High School – Cadet Jordan B. Vertrees
Murphy High School – Cadet Mercedes English
Rain High School – Cadet Gamyia Petite (GA-MY-A PeTeet)
Saraland High School – Cadet Orion Halagean
Satsuma High School – Cadet Hannah Rohe
Theodore High School – Cadet Jakob Oliver
Vigor High School – Cadet Kelsey M. Ellis
Williamson High School – Cadet Cassius Priest

The keynote speaker was Commander Mark K. Fields, U.S. Navy (ret.), the executive director of the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park.



Devoted Coin Ceremony honoring our Veterans - Battleship Memorial Park

Devoted Health is a company that exclusively offers [Medicare Advantage](#) plans. These plans are an alternative to Original Medicare, often including additional benefits like dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage.

Brandon McFarland from Devoted explained the Devoted Challenge Coin and what it represents LTC Frank Barrow, USA (Ret), was the Guest Speaker at the Coin Ceremony, which honored all Veterans who were present.

Tom Claxton hosted the POW/MIA Missing Man Table Ceremony.

The Color Guard from DAV Chapter 45, led by Judy Whidbee, opened and closed the ceremony by placing and retiring the colors. There will also be an American Flag Folding ceremony.

SPONSORED BY:

Brandon McFarlan-Devoted Health..... 251-391-3788
Or Phil Quigley –Sage Health... 251-709-4942



Guest Speaker – LTC Frank Barrow, USA, (Ret); Sage Health, Phil Quigley; Kecia Chambers, Medicare Plan Advisor.



National Montford Point Marines Asso.

NMPMA J. Gary Cooper Chapter#33 honors three local students at its 2025 Scholarship Program



Alvin Daily, Jr. (Saraland High School) received the \$1000 "J. Gary Cooper" Scholarship
Ava Davis (Satsuma High School) and Ashlynn Marcantel (Baker High School) both received the \$1,000 Montford Point Marine "Legacy" Scholarship

HISTORIC OAKLAWN MEMORIAL CEMETERY 'Saluting Sacred Grounds'

Saluting Sacred Grounds is a community rejuvenation project at Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery.

Evelyn Toler is currently a high school senior working on her Girl Scout Gold Award. Girl Scouts Troop is Troop 8274. This award represents the highest achievement in Girl Scouting, demonstrating leadership skills by identifying a significant community issue, developing a sustainable solution, and executing a project that creates lasting positive change, all while managing a team of volunteers and showcasing planning and problem-solving abilities.

Toler's project, "Saluting Sacred Grounds", focuses on the maintenance and respect of a historical landmark, Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery. Oaklawn remains overgrown and littered constantly as there is not enough help or volunteers to clean the grounds and keep plant life at bay routinely. This is an issue as it prevents the veterans' family members from being able to get to their graves to visit them, as well as being disrespectful towards our veterans who have passed on by not keeping their resting places clean.

To help support Evelyn's mission, she can be contacted at: evelyntoler@icloud.com





River Region Veterans Coalition – Central Alabama in and near Montgomery, AL
 RRVC www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61574462792355 RRVC is a non-profit/apolitical coalition of public and private sector organizations that serve military veterans in the River Region of central Alabama



The Joint Commission, the nation's oldest and largest healthcare accreditation organization, has recognized Vets Recover with Behavioral Health Care and Human Services Accreditation, a symbol of our commitment to providing safe, high-quality healthcare to Service Members, Veterans, First Responders, and their families.

Vets Recover provides a complete continuum-of-care, including Detox, Inpatient, Outpatient, and Community Integration programs developed by Veterans for Veterans. We are Alabama's most comprehensive Veterans Resource Center. Call anytime 251-405-3677.

Primary Care Services

We can now be your medical home!

- Annual Wellness Exam & Screening
- Chronic Disease Management
- Acute Illness Care
- Convenient Care



Outpatient Services

Our outpatient services deliver the highest quality integrated healthcare and accelerate well-being to treat the whole person while providing hope and healing. We offer our clients comprehensive primary care, integrated behavioral health, peer

support, transportation assistance, and many other services.

The Vets Recover continuum-of-care was developed by clinical experts and Veterans, First Responders, and Family (SMVF) members in recovery who have faced and lived with mental health issues, addiction, and trauma. Our Continuum-of-Care provides every level of care uniquely tailored for Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF); from community-based peer support to the highest level of medically monitored detox and residential treatment available. Our integrated healthcare system accelerates well-being to treat the whole person while providing hope and healing. Military cultural competency and integrated Peer Support create a unique recovery-oriented organization of professionals who know the problem because we've lived it; we also know the solution, and we know what it takes to recover.

Crisis mental health services, including 24-hour mobile crisis teams, emergency crisis intervention services, and crisis stabilization

Screening, assessment, and diagnosis, including risk assessment

- Patient-centered treatment planning or similar processes, including risk assessment and crisis planning
- Outpatient mental health and substance use services
- Outpatient clinic primary care screening and monitoring of key health indicators and health risk
- Targeted case management
- Telehealth
- Transportation Assistance
- Peer support, counselor services, and family support

Vets Recover Community Service



Vets Recover Team at
 Historic Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery



MILITARY ORDER OF PURPLE HEART

The Office of Military Services hosted a ceremony to celebrate the University of South Alabama being designated as a Purple Heart University! This honor is given to universities that demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting military-affiliated populations.

A great honor for South to be designated a Purple Heart university for their long-standing history of supporting veterans and service members, especially those wounded in combat, and their families. Special thanks to the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Alabama State Commander Andrew Del Gaudio for bestowing an honor only given to two other universities in the state.



In April 2013, Troy University was the first in the country to be designated a "Purple Heart University."

In August 2017 the University of Alabama became a Purple Heart University.

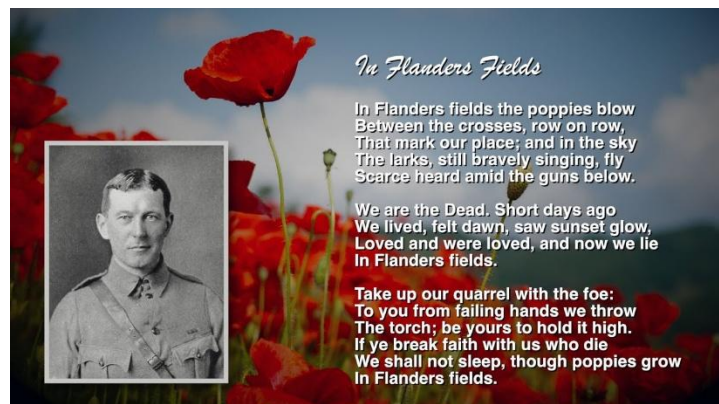
The move comes in an effort to honor veterans who have been given the award that was created by Gen. George Washington. The Military Order of the Purple Heart is granted to those service members who have been killed or wounded in battle.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RED POPPIES?

Red poppies are ubiquitous on Memorial Day, but they're also visible on Veterans Day. The poppies are typically worn to honor fallen military personnel. A 1915 poem written by a Canadian Lieutenant Colonel named John McCrae referred to the fields of poppies

growing around the graves of World War I soldiers in Flanders.

In the battlefields of Belgium during World War I, poppies grew wild amid the ravages of war.



MAY EVENTS

May 15 - The 1st annual Veterans in Leadership Conference will begin with registration at 8 a.m., the program at 9 a.m., and the conference will run until 1 p.m. **on 15 May 2025 at the UWF Conference Center (BLDG 22).** We will have coffee and a continental breakfast available

May 15 – 6:30 pm Waterfront Restaurant “Stars and Stripes Party” supporting Warrior Legacy Ranch
RSVP <https://order.toasttab.com/.../the-waterfront-pp-group-1...>

May 17 – 8:30 am – 1:00 pm Armed Forces Day, VSO EXPO, MRE Cook-off Battleship Memorial Park

May 26 – 7:00 am, Flag lowering - Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Battleship Memorial Park

May 26 – 8:30 am Memorial Day Ceremony
National Veterans Cemetery, Virginia St., Mobile, AL,
Guest Speaker, Rep Shomari Figures (AL-02)

May 26 – 10 am W.F. Green Veterans Home
Memorial Day Ceremony, Guest Speaker
LTC Robert Frank Barrow, USA (Ret)

May 26 – 11:00 am, Memorial Day Ceremony,
Alabama State Veterans Cemetery, Guest Speaker
CDR Mark Fields, USN (Ret)

May 26 – 6:45 am Memorial Day flag relay - Alabama Gulf Coast region. opportunity to participate as a running/jogging "Flag Carrier" for a one-mile leg along our designated 22-mile route, contact:

Endel Lee, (251) 649-1430/cell

Email: endellee@yahoo.com.



Publix.

The bakery department provides SAVC pastries at meetings Kandace Breeland, Publix Store Manager 9124 Cottage Hill Rd. Mobile, AL 251-634-5141

SAVC Minutes April 15, 2025

Pastries provided by Publix West Mobile, McFarland & Cottage Hill

1. Welcome and Call to Order: Frank Barrow called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m., with 84 in attendance. The Location was American Legion Post 88

2. Opening Prayer & Pledge: Chaplain Austin, opening prayer. Pledge led by Pat Downing.

Mayoral Candidate Barbara Drummond presented her platform for mayor, then departed for a meeting in Montgomery.

Other candidates, Commissioner Connie Hudson, Spiro Cheriogotis, Paul Prine, and Lawrence Battiste, presented their platform for mayor and responded to questions. Jermaine Burrell, Steve Nodine, and Pastor Michael Woodard were not present.

3. Welcome and introduction of new attendees: Frank Barrow

4. Newsletter & Minutes, Fran Barber-Bruyn, Secretary: The February meeting minutes were included in the newsletter. The minutes were approved as read.

5. Treasury & Grant Presentations:

Grant: Warrior Legacy Ranch
April: Received \$400.00 from Sage Health Group, \$246.00 from breakfast, and the hat collected \$187.00.

Comfort & Care Drive Committee:

In honor of CAPT Robert Von Barrow:

Phil Quigley, Sage Health; **Kecia Chambers**, The Medicare Lady; **Brandon McFarland**, Devoted Insurance; **Kelly Ready**, Arabella Skilled Nursing & Rehab; **Dawn Skelton**, Enhabit Home Health & Hospice; **Whitney McDevitt**, Enhabit Home Health & Hospice.

6. Navy & Veterans News: Pete is attending a MOAA meeting in Montgomery

7. Current Veterans Activities and AL News: See topics of interest below

8. AL Veterans Cemetery Foundation: Joe Buschell's report: 4428 internments, Baldwin County Commission providing support for the Memorial Day Service, guest speaker CDR Mark Fields.

9. USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park: Eb Counts, spring break tourism ramping up, Military Affairs Luncheon Thursday, Armed Forces Day Ceremony in May, and Memorial Day flag lowering

10. Alabama Dept. of Veteran Affairs: No report

11. AFD –Shawn Davidson: Planning meeting after SAVC meeting, challenge to VSO MRE cook-off, and EXPO

12. VMRT: Vets Recover will clean their area on April 17, and Girl Scouts will be out on Earth Day.

13. Alabama Chapter 92nd Buffalo Soldiers:

Vietnam War Veterans event 3/29 at Revelation Baptist Church, meeting at Truevine Baptist Church Thursday night.

14. Topics of Interest: Barrow encouraged everyone to visit the Veterans Cemetery, RDML reported on Flag Relay on Memorial Day, CPOA-President, Pablo reported on American Legion post 511 bike ride from Texas to Tampa convention in August, John Joe Dec reported on Prescription Drug Take Back on April 26. MOPH Pres Andrew Del Gaudio Chapter 2206 reported that on April 29, 2 pm, the USA will become a Purple Heart University, and on May 15, the University of West Florida Convention Center will discuss veterans' issues. Ket Davis spoke about the River Region Veterans Coalition. Alabama PGR riders Asst State Capt Richard Ullo reported on PGR. ADML Kent Davis reported that the RRVC is a non-profit/apolitical coalition of public and private sector organizations that serve military veterans in the River Region of central Alabama (in and around Montgomery). Willie Dunning reported on the available SS benefits. Vets Recover, Austin, reported they passed their Joint Commission Certification inspection and are open for business. COL Mitchell reported on the passing of MPM member Willie Shipman.

15. Guest Speaker: Mayoral Candidates

16. Good of the Order: The next meeting will be at the Denton Drake American Legion Post 88 on Halls Mill Rd, Mobile, AL, May 20, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Fran Barber, Secretary