



South Alabama Veterans Council

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



Robert "Frank" Barrow
President
251-423-0437

Pat Downing
Vice President
251-751-6619

Robert Shawn Davidson
Deputy VP Operations
985-264-3471

Fran Barber
Secretary / Newsletter
251-605-1290

Tom Schwarz
Treasurer
251-649-8459

Lloyd Michael Austin
Chaplain
251-391-8176

Pete Riehm
Liaison Officer / MC
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



Capt Hal Perce, Bill Alberson, Sy Lichtenfeld, Spiritus Immertus SAVC

LTC Lou Lartigue, President Emeritus



Happy New Year Fellow Veterans!

Now that the holidays are over it is time to set our sights on key activities taking place in 2026! Soon we will be having elections as outlined in our recently adopted bylaws, and I encourage each of you to consider serving on the executive board of our organization...more to come on that front in the weeks ahead! Our next major event will be Armed Forces Day to be held in May...planning has already begun to make this a success. As I mentioned in our December newsletter, our January meeting will be held at the Waterfront Restaurant in Daphne, Alabama...it is located at the site of the former Lake Forest Yacht Club. We hope we have a huge turnout. Our guest speaker will be Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Chevelle Thomas, the Director of Army Instruction for the Mobile County Public Schools System, where she oversees both the JROTC and LOTC programs. A graduate of Blount High School and a veteran of multiple tours overseas, she continues to do great things on behalf of our future leaders! She plans to give us an update on new initiatives for both programs.

Finally, I ask that you keep our very own Lou Lartigue in your prayers...he has been in the hospital recently and is now in rehab after taking a fall. As you all know, Lou led this organization for many years, and the success we have enjoyed all this time is a direct reflection of his leadership! Hopefully, he will be back on his feet soon and join us for our monthly meetings! In the meantime, I look forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting...all the best for a great 2026!

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



New Year, new commandment:

Read John 13:34

A new commandment I give unto you. That you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

God is love, and He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, what more proof do we need of his love for us?

I think we need to learn how to love each other more and demonstrate our love for each other through our actions. Remember, love is patient, love is kind, love is slow to anger, love is not envious, love is not puffed up, love thinks no evil. Love rejoices in the truth. Love has belief, hope, and endurance. Love never fails. So, as we move forward into 2026, let's make a valid effort to love each other more. It doesn't mean we will always agree, but it does mean we can agree to disagree and still love each other.

I want to encourage all of us to love God, love our families and friends, love each other, and this wonderful Nation that we have.

In the Name of JESUS!
Pastor Lloyd Michael Austin,
Chaplain SAVC



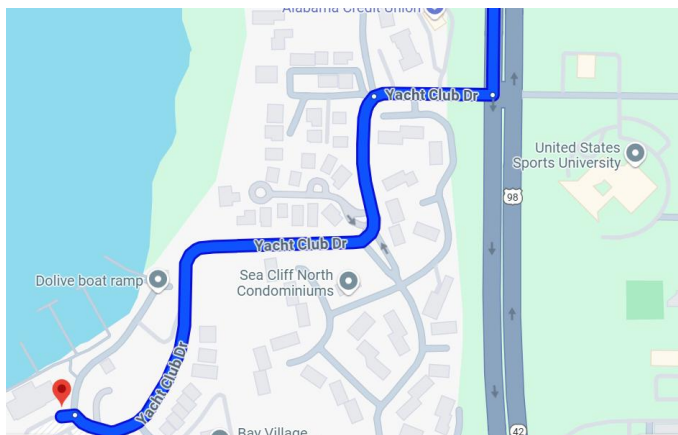
SAVE THE DATE

January 20, 2026 Meeting The Waterfront Restaurant

1 Yacht Dr., Daphne, AL

Breakfast 9:00 am

Across the street from United States Sports University



The Waterfront 1 Yacht Club Drive



GUEST SPEAKER

LTC Chevelle Thomas

ALCTE JROTC Section President and Director of
Army Instruction for

Mobile County Public School System

LTC Chevelle Thomas

**will talk about the JROTC/LOTC Program in
the Mobile County Public School System**

LTC Thomas is an experienced military professional and educator with over 28 years of leadership in the U.S. Army and education. She currently serves as the ALCTE JROTC Section President and Director of Army Instruction for Mobile County Public School System, where she has direct oversight of 12 JROTC high school Army and Navy JROTC programs and 15 LOTC middle school programs. Before moving to the district level, she was the Senior Army Instructor for Murphy High School in Mobile, Alabama, where, under her leadership, the program earned Honor Unit with Distinction for five consecutive years.

A dedicated advocate for education and youth development, Chevelle has mentored hundreds of students, helping them secure ROTC and academic scholarships while fostering leadership, discipline, and civic responsibility. Her military career includes key roles in strategic communications, media relations, and crisis management, notably as the Director of Communications and Public Affairs at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where she led media initiatives for the Army-Navy game, achieving a 23-year high Nielsen rating. She also served as the Division Public Affairs Officer for the 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, while deployed to Iraq in 2016; media chief for the Presidential Inauguration Committee in 2012; and Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Officer for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division in Afghanistan in 2008.

Chevelle earned a Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University and a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Xavier University of Louisiana. She is also a certified Army JROTC Instructor and has completed extensive professional development in leadership, education, and public affairs. She has received numerous honors over the years, including the Golden Apple Teacher Award and the Ancient Order of Saint Gabriel Medal for Public Affairs, recognizing her outstanding contributions to education and service. She is also a two-time Bronze Star recipient for her deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq in support of the Global War on Terrorism.





**South Alabama Veterans Council
VETERANS SPOTLIGHT
Reverend William Henry Greason,
Original Montford Point Marine**



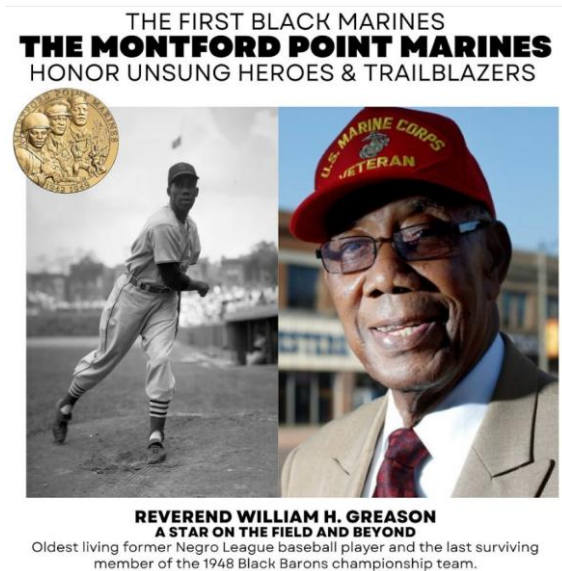
OMPM Reverend William Henry Greason was assigned to Mobile Chapter #33 by the National President of the Association in 2017. In 1943, Greason, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, enlisted in the Marine Corps and received basic training at Montford Point Camp. He served with the 66th Supply Platoon, 34th Depot Company, V Amphibious Corps during World War II in the Battle of Iwo Jima, where he witnessed the raising of the American flag and dedicated his life to God. He served from 1943 to 1945 and later served again during the Korean War from 1951 to 1952.

William Greason is a former professional baseball legend, a civil rights pioneer, and a Baptist minister. His accolades include being a standout pitcher for the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro Leagues, where Willie Mays was his teammate; playing as a minor leaguer with the Oklahoma City Indians in 1952; and becoming the first Black starting pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1954. He played baseball in the minor, major, and Latin American leagues. OMPM Reverend Greason studied for the ministry at Birmingham Baptist College and became a member of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. He was angered and outraged by the bombing of the church in 1963 by the Ku Klux Klan, in which four children were killed; however, Greason was not at the

church at the time of the bombing. Reverend Greason became pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham in 1971, where he has preached for over 53 years; he now preaches only on the first Sunday.

He has dedicated a decade to community service through "Project Help," which provides a lasting legacy for underprivileged children in Birmingham. He also hosts a "Museum of Legends" featuring notable community members and souvenirs from his life as a Marine, baseball legend, and pastor. The museum is located in the basement of Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

America has continued to grapple with its racial history, but in later life, Greason also has received long-overdue recognition for his accomplishments before his ministerial career. On June 27, 2012, he was in Washington, D.C. as part of a group of 370 Montford Point Marines who received the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor. Two months later, on August 30, he was honored by the minor-league Oklahoma City Redhawks (now the Dodgers) on the 60th anniversary of breaking the color barrier in Oklahoma. On September 21, 2014, the St. Louis Cardinals held a similar ceremony to commemorate the 60th anniversary of his debut as the franchise's first African-American pitcher.



William "Bill" Greason, the oldest living former Negro League baseball player and the last surviving member of the 1948 Black Barons championship team. As of June 2024, he is the second-oldest living major league player and one of the last surviving Negro league players.

JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Martin Luther King, Jr Day January 19, 2026

International Holocaust Remembrance Day is Tuesday, January 27, 2026, marking the anniversary of the Red Army's liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

At a time when antisemitism and extremism are both on the rise, remembering the atrocities of the Holocaust and its victims—the genocide of six million Jews (one million of whom died in Auschwitz alone) and five million members of other marginalized groups, including disabled persons, homosexuals, Romani people and more. The mass murder of 11 million human beings—people with families, with dreams, with full lives that were cut brutally short—must not be forgotten.

What Is Holocaust Remembrance Day and When Is It Observed in the U.S.?

There are a few observances in the U.S. that you should know about.

There are three major Holocaust Remembrance Observances held at different times and locations worldwide. The first to be established was “Yom HaShoah” (“Holocaust Remembrance Day”). Next were the “Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust” in the U.S. and most recently, “International Holocaust Remembrance Day” established by the United Nations.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day was established in 2005 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and is observed on January 27 each year. It corresponds with the same date in 1945 when the largest Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, was liberated.

The United Nations General Assembly designated this date as a day for all members to look back and remember the victims of the Holocaust. It was one of the most tragic times in history when the Nazis killed nearly six million European Jews and five million prisoners of war and other victims during the course of World War II, according to the National WWII Museum, New Orleans. This shocking genocide eliminated about two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population.

Regardless of where and when a **Holocaust Remembrance Day** occurs, the meaning of it is the same. It's important that what happened to Jewish people during WWII is never forgotten.

Related: 15 Moving Movies and TV Shows About The Holocaust for Holocaust Remembrance Day

What Is the Difference Between International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Days of Remembrance and Yom HaShoah?

Synagogues and Jewish communities worldwide observe Yom HaShoah in April or May, depending on the year, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In the United States, two observances are broadly recognized throughout the country: **International Holocaust Remembrance Day** and the **Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust** (or “**Days of Remembrance**” for short).

When Is International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2026?

International Holocaust Remembrance Day falls on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. The premise of all the remembrances is about the same. They use the set-apart time to commemorate the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Why Were The Days of Remembrance Established?

The Days of Remembrance were actually established 25 years before International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

On November 1, 1978, President Jimmy Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust and gave the Commission the responsibility to establish and maintain an appropriate memorial to those who were killed in the Holocaust.

The Commission consisted of 34 members, comprising Holocaust survivors, religious leaders, historians, and members of Congress. Suggestions were also taken from American citizens, and further research was gained by traveling to Holocaust sites and other memorials in Europe.

Then, in 1980, the U.S. Congress passed legislation to establish the Days of Remembrance as a way to remember the Holocaust officially and to create the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a permanent memorial to the victims. The museum is also responsible for planning Remembrance Day events and encouraging observances throughout the United States.

In a speech by former Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken (2021), he quotes what was written by an Auschwitz survivor after the Jews were locked in a gas chamber with only three minutes to live. The survivor had said that “in those final minutes they found enough strength to dig their fingernails into the walls and scratch in the words, ‘Never forget!’” Through establishing Days of Remembrance, we will never, ever forget.



MOBILE BAY AREA VETERANS COMMISSION PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Steve Carey, Col USAF (Ret)

2025 PARADE OF FLAGS PRESENTATION TO THE MOBILE AND BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

Each year, the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission and Battleship Memorial Park host "The Parade of Flags," which features the Distinguished Young Woman of America as the guest speaker.

The event also includes an essay contest where fourth-grade students in Mobile and Baldwin counties are asked to write about "What Veterans Day Means to Me." Three winners from each county are chosen and receive prizes for themselves and their classrooms.

On Monday, December 22, at the Mobile County Commissioners meeting, the three essay winners from Mobile County read their essays. The Mobile County winners were: 1st place Savanah Andry, Echol Mertz Elementary, Teacher - Mrs. Natasha Mabien; 2nd place Patricia Cushman, Council Elementary, Teacher - Mrs. Dina Graves; 3rd place Lyric Urbane, Corpus Christi Catholic School, Teacher - Mrs. Tammy Graddick.

BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

On December 19, the Baldwin County Essay Winners read their essays to the Baldwin County Commissioners. Baldwin County winners: 1st Place Riley Reaves, Snook Christian Academy, Teacher - Mrs. Hannah Bartl; 2nd Place Sadie Pilot, Bayside Academy, Teacher - Mrs. Alyssa Tuel; 3rd Place Olivia Black, J. Larry Newton Elementary, Teacher - Mrs. Marla Warner.

The event was the culmination of hard work by our Parade of Flags VP, Genavese Harris; Battleship Memorial Park; and the VP of Education, Margaret Coley, of the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Commission. The Parade of Flags contest is open to all 4th-grade students in Mobile and Baldwin Counties.



SAVC, CAVC, NAVFOC, AND RRVC THE VETERANS VOICE VETERANS UNITE

In addition to the South Alabama Veterans Council, which covers seven counties in southern Alabama, three similar groups are currently active elsewhere in the state: the Central Alabama Veterans Collaborative (CAVC) in Birmingham, the North Alabama Veterans & Fraternal Organizations Coalition (NAVFOC), and the River Region Veterans Coalition (RRVC) in and near Montgomery, AL. SAVC, CAVC, NAVFOC, and RRVC can collaborate to advocate for the state's large veteran community.



South Alabama Veterans Council

www/savc.info



Central Alabama Veterans Collaborative (CAVC)

www.facebook.com/AlabamaCAVC/



North Alabama Veterans & Fraternal Organizations Coalition (NAVFOC)

www.navfoc.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.



PP HOSPITALITY GROUP

Publix

The bakery department provides SAVC pastries at SAVC meetings, 9124 Cottage Hill Rd. Mobile, AL

