



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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CAPT HAL PIERCE, SPIRITUS AMERITUS SAVC

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— we will not meet in July —

THE FIRST BATTLES OF THE WAR for American Independence from England occurred at Concord and Lexington, Massachusetts, April 19, 1775. On June 7, 1776, when the Continental Congress met at the Pennsylvania State House (now known as Independence Hall) in Philadelphia, the Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion calling for the colonies' independence. A five-man committee was appointed to draft a statement of the colonies' intentions and on July 2 they presented the Declaration of Independence, written largely by Thomas Jefferson. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration and that date became the 'birthday' of the United States of America. And the rest, as they say, is history - at least up until today ...

JULY IS THE SEVENTH MONTH of the year in the Julian and Gregorian Calendars and the fourth of seven months to have a length of 31 days. It was named by the Roman Senate in honor of Roman general Julius Caesar, it being the month of his birth. Prior to that, it was called Quintilis, being the fifth month of the 10-month calendar.

THE GENERAL GARY COOPER OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD (FROM MOBILE CHAMBER) is in honor of Mobile native, Major General J Gary Cooper, USMC, and is given to a member of the community that best embodies the attributes

that General Cooper displayed throughout his incredible career.

General Cooper was commissioned in the Marine Corps as a second lieutenant upon graduating from Notre Dame in 1958 (at the time there were 20,000 Marine Officers, only six of them were black). General Cooper served on active duty for 12 years commanding many units, including the Marine Detachment aboard the Guided Missile Cruiser Chicago. In 1967, he became the first black officer in the Marine Corps to lead an Infantry company in combat which is noted in the historical calendar of the Marine Corps. In Vietnam, General Cooper earned



J Gary Cooper

photo from internet

a number of decorations for heroism including the Bronze Star, two purple hearts for wounds received in combat, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry three times. He also received the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit as well. After getting off active duty in 1970, General Cooper went on to lead a number of units in the Reserves, to include the 13th Force Reconnaissance Company in Mobile. He went

I've had my patience tested. I'm negative.



back on active duty when he was promoted to Major General and served as the Director of Personnel, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps. He retired from the Marine Corps in 1996.

The recipient of this award inspires and demands the rest of us to be better today than we were yesterday by living out the values we see in General Cooper: achievement, courage, excellence, and humility.

THE AWARD THIS YEAR was presented to LOU LARTIGUE, President, South Alabama Veterans Council. An Honor well-deserved.

LTC Frank Barrow, Director, Army Instruction, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Program, Mobile County Public School System, nominated Lou for the award (*I seconded the nomination*). "Lou has been a key community leader in our City for many years, serving as the President of the South Alabama Veterans Council (SAVC) since the time I have known him. This organization consists of various Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) that support our surrounding area and is unique in that once a month, they meet to coordinate and collaborate all veterans activities throughout the year. In addition, several years ago he took on the monstrous task of implementing the annual Blue Star Salute Ceremony for the State of Alabama. He did such a great job that the ceremony has moved permanently from Birmingham to Mobile! Please note that a portion of this annual event is a Gold Star Memorial Ceremony where families of fallen Alabama Veterans meet to remember the sacrifice these men and women gave us in defense of freedom. Lou was also recognized as Mobile's Veteran of the Year a few years ago. He is a humble man who seldom seeks the limelight, preferring to recognize those around him who help make things happen for our community. What I know, and I would venture to say all those who know him know, is simply this...Lou is a leader of extraordinary talent without whom we could not accomplish the many great things for veterans that get done throughout the year. I am proud to nominate him for this distinguished award!"

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life so far: It goes on — Robert Frost

LOUIS J. LARTIGUE SR., a Mobile native, attended high school at McGill Institute in Mobile and college at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He graduated in 1968 with a degree in Personnel and Industrial Management and left the ROTC Program as a Distinguished Military Graduate commissioned in the Signal Corps.

Lou entered the Army in February 1968 and was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. In 1969 he

was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam.

Subsequent assignments saw duty with the 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii, and 82nd Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg, NC. He held several Signal and Logistics



Lou Lartigue
Photo By Bill

Staff positions with Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group,

Thailand/Laos; Headquarters U.S. Army Communications Command, Ft. Huachuca, AZ; Headquarters U.S. Army Europe, Heidelberg Germany; U.S. Army Electronics Research and Development Command, Maryland; and Headquarters Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Pentagon. Lou attended the Armed Forces Staff College, Logistics Executive Development Course, and graduated from Florida Institute of Technology with an MS in Logistics Management. After retirement from the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1988, Lou went to work with CACI INC-Federal in Washington, DC in the Information Engineering and System Analysis career fields for 15 years. He was a Department Manager and Project Manager for several major research and engineering projects for the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army.

Lou is married to his wife Betty of 54 years, has three children; two live in Mobile, AL., and one with her Marine family in Okinawa, Japan. Both he and his wife are involved in volunteer work with the Community and Church. Lou is currently the Chaplain and Past Commander VFW Post 49, Member Honor Guard American Legion Post 250 and MOAA. He is President of the South Alabama Veterans Council, Board of Directors Parkway Senior Citizens Center and State Veterans Cemetery

Foundation, Past Grand Knight Council 8740, and Past President, Society of Logistics Engineers.

SINCE WE'VE NOT BEEN ABLE to meet in person, a few of us have experimented with ZOOM - you may have heard of it. Lou instigated it and he seems to have a good grip on it. If you have a computer (or have access to someone else's computer) and would like to join us we will meet at 1:00PM (1300hrs) on Tuesday, July 21 - our normal meeting day - send your email address to Lou (loulartigue@bellsouth.net) and he will send you the link and password to join in. Try it - you'll like it.

MANY BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN closed and many meetings and gatherings have been cancelled or postponed because of the CoViD-19 outbreak.

The American Legion State Convention has been cancelled but Jim Jeffries assured us the POW-MIA Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Site Capitol in September.

Another victim of the pandemic is Saucy Q BBQ restaurant in Mobile. SAVC has not been meeting and with 'social distancing' in place fewer than normal patrons have been in to eat.

SO - we need to support the folks - **GO EAT** -

THE GRASS AND WEEDS at Oaklawn Memorial Cemetery have not been adversely affected by the pandemic; if anything, they've benefitted from it. We've had good help from area churches, Veterans Organizations, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and many individuals in reclaiming the cemetery from many years of neglect. Since the virus hit, only a few folks have been out. But we continue the mission. If you'd like to help, come out Saturday morning or contact Fran -> sweetgumcat@aol.com

To date we have documented 8,294 graves of which 787 are Military Veterans. We are nearly half way through the cemetery.

Veterans Memorial Recovery Team is now a non-profit charitable entity in the State of Alabama and we have secured 501(c)(3) status.

ATTENDANCE AT Battleship Park "is about 60% of what it normally would be at this time of year," reported Pat Downing (in a recent ZOOM

meeting). After more of the beaches and parks and sites such as Disney World open up, traffic through our area will increase and our parks and attractions will see an increase in visitors. Reenactments at the Battleship are on again. There has been one "aerial attack" which was successfully repulsed; the next Living History Crew Drill is scheduled August 1, 8:00AM - 4:00PM.

The Park will soon see two 'new' aircraft join the collection. Jimmy Buffett has offered these aircraft to the Park and they're "looking into it." Buffett holds a Commercial Pilot License with ratings for multi-engine land and sea aircraft, and is an aviation and antique aircraft buff. (from military.wikia.org)

- (1) The **Grumman G-21 Goose** was an amphibious aircraft designed by Grumman to serve as an eight-seat "commuter" aircraft for businessmen



photo from internet

in the Long Island area. The Goose was Grumman's first monoplane to fly, its first twin-engined aircraft, and its first aircraft to enter commercial airline service. During World War II, the Goose became an effective transport for the US military as well as serving with many other air forces. During hostilities, the Goose took on an increasing number of combat and training roles. The adaptable transport continued in postwar use.

- (2) **The Stearman (Boeing) Model 75** is a biplane used as a military trainer aircraft, of which at least 8,584 were built in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s. Stearman Aircraft became a subsidiary of Boeing in 1934.



photo from internet

Widely known as the Stearman, Boeing Stearman or Kaydet, it served as a primary trainer for the USAAF, the USN (as the NS & N2S), and with the RCAF as the Kaydet throughout World

The only thing new in this world is the history you don't know -Harry S Truman



War II. After the conflict was over, thousands of surplus aircraft were sold on the civilian market. In the immediate postwar years they became popular as crop dusters, sports planes, and for aerobatic and wing walking use in airshows. Downing said, "We'll have to do some shuffling inside the Medal of Honor Aircraft Pavilion in order to get those two airplanes inside the pavilion" to satisfy conditions of the transfer. These two aircraft are old and fragile and they need protection from the elements.

There's a newly-opened Veterans Service Office in Henry county. This is one of the 17 offices Adm Davis said Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs was going to open. The goal is to have an office open in each of the 67 counties in Alabama. There are now 51 county offices open.

The State Veterans Cemetery at Spanish Fort -Arlington South- reopened for burials on 15 June with some restrictions. Only "family and friends" are allowed at the committal shelter and "social distancing" is required.

The Ladies of Quilts of Valor in Mobile have Quilts on hand and they want to give them away. If you know a local Veteran who has not received a Quilt of Valor email b_atkeison@bellsouth.net

BRIAN CRAWFORD, FROM BIRMINGHAM area, joined us in the ZOOM meeting. He heads up a group similar to SAVC; Central Alabama Veterans Collaborative (CAVC). CAVC started in January, 2019. Brian was working with the National Guard liaison to the Alabama Department of Rehab Services. "They have a partner-ship to provide certain services to active-duty members of the National Guard. She needed to plan a military culture meeting." In thinking about who would be good to have in the meeting and in calling them together they grew into what became CAVC. The first meeting was February 2019 with '16 or 17 people." The meeting in June 2020 saw 51 and the high number so far has been 60. They have "roughly 140 on the distribution list representing 70 programs, agencies, and non-profits and retirees. Our bottomline mission is to collaborate among ourselves to deliver



My luck is like a bald guy who just won a comb.

maximum service to our military community." That includes active duty, Reserve and National Guard, and Veterans.

They meet the second Thursday of each month at 10:00AM and their meeting sometimes go to two hours.

[editor's note: by comparison, SAVC's first few meetings had 6-15 people in attendance; 2007 saw 20-25 people and 2019 averaged 52 per meeting]

IT'S TIME AGAIN TO THINK about honoring one of our local Veterans. Of the thousands of Veterans in the Mobile Bay area we'll pick one. It should be easy.

MOBILE BAY AREA VETERAN OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

Veteran of the Year nominations for the 2020-21 Veteran of the Year will be accepted by the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission, from July 15 to August 15, 2020.

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 five 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 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, Wednesday, November 11, 2020.

The nomination will be valid for three years.

Nominations should be mailed to:

Col. Steve Carey,
Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission
P.O. Box 321
Daphne, AL 36526-0321



[editor's note: *It's been my honor to wear this medallion since Veterans Day 2019. It will be my pleasure to pass it to the next selected Veteran.*]

I ASKED LTC FRANK BARROW about schools in Mobile County and what effect this 'sickness' would have on JROTC. He answered, "School is scheduled to start 10 August...parents have a choice of pure virtual instruction or a modified face to face classroom instruction. No idea yet what this looks like or if JROTC can conduct extracurricular activities!"

DEAR AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY,

It's hard to safely "shelter in" when you live in a transition facility for the homeless. Fortunately, American Legion Post 1948 in Montgomery, Ala., has shown strong support for such a place. The local P.E.E.R.S. (Positive Environment Engaging Recovery Support) Caring Home for Veterans was the recipient of water, gloves, masks and food donations provided by the post thanks to grant money from the Community COVID-19 United Relief Fund.

This emergency has been difficult for communities around the world, but our American Legion keeps stepping up.

Bill Oxford
National Commander 24 June 2020

and now, the long-awaited story of

Donald L. Vinson, CWO4 USCG, Retired

In early 1945 The USS Houston, a Light Cruiser, was towed into the Brooklyn NY Navy Yard for repairs to the damage suffered in two Japanese torpedo attacks in the Pacific. Aboard was Charles M. Vinson, a young sailor from the red clay hills of Josie, Alabama. During his shore leave in NYC he met a Native New Yorker from Brooklyn NY, Marie B. Leedock. Fate was at play as the Country Boy and City Girl fell in love, married and started a family. By 1952, they had moved back and forth from Josie, AL to Brooklyn NY and Marie had given birth to 3 children.

Donald had two sisters, Doris Lorraine, older and Duella Lois, younger. Ironically they were both conceived in NY and Born in Banks, Alabama, while Don was conceived in Josie, AL and born in Brooklyn. He was Born 22 October 1947. They settled in NY to allow their children to attend school. They attended PS 171 from 1st thru 9th Grades. Don opted to attend Food & Maritime Trades HS (Scholarship John W. Brown) in Manhattan,



from which he graduated in 1965. Don was exposed to boating, hunting and fishing early on, by the age of 14, Donald had already decided he would be joining the USCG. After graduation, Don immediately joined the US Merchant Marines, and sailed on the T-2 tanker Sucony Sun.

Don wasn't fond of the smell of oil, and that adventure was short lived and he took a position on the 110' Harbor Tug Huntington in NY Harbor. He joined the USCG in Sept 1966 and went to Boot camp in Cape May N.J. His first assignment was Norfolk Va where he served on small boats for Search & Rescue and Aids to Navigation response. He was transferred to Seattle Washington in 1967 to the Commissioning crew of the Patrol Boat Point Brown. Serving as a Deck Seaman, the crew of 8 sailed the Point Brown to her homeport of Norfolk, VA. There he served until he was advanced to E-4, Nov. 1968. He was transferred to Baltimore, in Jan 1969, to the Boating Safety Detachment, to Teach and Enforce Federal Boating Laws. The Detachment also Served as a Search & Rescue Platform and a Hurricane Response Unit. In 1970, Don met Ms. Lorna Kabilus and In Aug. 1971, He married Lorna. (They have two Daughters; Missy & Casey, both live in Mobile County, AL.) Don advanced to E-6 and became the Officer in Charge of the Detachment. Don joined the Masonic Fraternity in October 1971 His next assignment was in July 1973 as a Deck Force Supervisor, aboard the Ice-Breaker, USCGC Edisto. Three deployments to the Arctic later, Don was assigned to the Coast Guard Intelligence & Law Enforcement Branch as a Special Agent in New Orleans, LA. June 1976, Don was advanced to Chief Petty Officer (E-6), June 1977 Don was Promoted to Senior Special Agent, He was transferred to be the Resident Agent, CGL, Mobile, AL. A one man Office covering over 62,000 sq. miles. He conducted Criminal & Back Ground Investigations as well as making multi-ton drug seizures off shore. April 1980, Don was directed to proceed to Key West, FL. and Assist other Federal Agencies with the influx of Cubans during the Mariel Boat Lift. Returning to Mobile, AL. in late May, just in time to be relieved and accept his commission to CWO2, and an Assignment to USCGC Dallas, home-ported in NY, Don served as the Department Head of the Deck Force (1st LT.). Shortly after reporting aboard, the ship sailed for the Key West Fla. area to serve as the Commodore of the CG SE Squadron in Response to the Mariel Boat Lift. While on Dallas, Don saw duty in the Arctic, off the coast of Europe

The greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes —Winston Churchill

and all over the Caribbean. Doing everything from Search and Rescue and Joint Ops with the US Navy, to Haitian Migration and Drug Interdiction. Don's next assignment was in the summer of 1982 as 1st LT. & Weapons Officer, aboard the USCGC Salvia. Servicing Aids to Navigation along the Gulf Coast was the Primary duty of this Mobile, AL. homeported vessel. However, more often than not it sailed about doing "Special Assignments" from Establishing Channels in the hotbed of Honduras to assist the US Navy, to Training in Guantanamo Bay Cuba, to action in Grenada as part of the peace-keeping force to Drug Interdiction Ops to Special OPS with Navy Seals to Annual Hurricane Relief along the Gulf Coast. In 1984 Don was advanced to CWO3, and in 1985 Don was assigned to the USCGC White Pine as Commanding Officer. Coastal and Inland Aids to Navigation Servicing was the Primary duty of this Mobile homeported vessel, and filling in for the USCGC Salvia when she was "frequently" elsewhere. The summer of 1985 kept everyone busy with 5 periods of Hurricane relief operations. The USCGC White Pine kept up the pace fill-ing in for its sister ship, the CGC White Holly out of New Orleans and working with the USCG Gulf Strike team with the VOSS Oil skimming system, the US Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg MS Experimental Unit on Experimental Aids to Navigation. June 1988 Don was advanced to CWO4. Don's next assignment in July 1988, was, homeported in Seattle Washington: USCGC Polar Star where Don served as 1st LT. & Weapons Officer. Deployments to the Arctic, circumnavigating the North American Continent Clockwise and Counter Clockwise as well as an Operation Deep Freeze to McMurdo Station Antarctica. Training, Qualifying, Outfitting and Supplying the Dept. for a year long "Assault on the Poles", kept the Ship and Don busy. September 1991, Don received orders to USCG Group (Now known as "Sector") Mobile, AL. as the Aids to Navigation Officer, (Program Manger for Aids to navigation, Offshore and Inland from St. Marks FL. to Bay St. Louis MS. & Aids to Navigation Teams and Two Cutters which were Construction Tenders) His collateral Duties included Haz-Mat Officer, Civil Rights & Human Relations Officer, Group Inspector (Deck). The job was short lived. In the fall of 1992 fate furnished another aloft tour. Don received Orders to USCGC White Pine as Commanding Officer ("A Reunion of Infinite Joy"). Don's second tour as Commanding Officer of the White Pine offered all the old and some new and different tasks. Solarization of Aids to Navigation was an ongoing process, plus Haz-Mat (old discarded Batteries) recovery operations along the Florida coast. Amidst the normal operations came 22 September 1993. The wreck of the AMTRAC Sunset Limited. The White Pine sped to the scene and upon arrival became the On-Scene

You think it's bad now? In 20 years our country will be run by people homeschooled by day drinkers...

Commander. From Accident Response of People In Danger, Injured, Dying, Fire, Oil Spill, & Crime Scene Preservation to Keeping on-lookers and the Press/News media out of the area, to Recovery Operations and subsequent Salvage Operations, White Pine remained On Scene. 31 Aug 1996 Don held the Change of Command and his Retirement Ceremony on the Buoy Deck of the USCGC White Pine.

Since Retirement from the USCG, Don has held various positions; Taught the 100 Ton & 500 Ton Vessel Masters Course, Harbor-Master for the Port of Pascagoula, Dock-Master, Port Captain and Emergency Manager for Signal International, President of the Pascagoula Port Advisory Group. Served for over 10 years as a member of the USCG Port Security Committee for Central Gulf Coast. After leaving Signal Int. Don went to work for AIG-Baker. He designed and supervised the build and running of the Marina at the Wharf, Orange Beach AL. His last job was with Integrity Investigations, Daphne, AL. where he served as an Investigator, concentrating on insurance fraud and homicides, with spare time serving papers thru Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. Don is a Life Member of Disabled American Veterans, The American Legion, The USCG CWOA, the USCG CPOA and is a Past Master of Semmes Masonic Lodge and currently serving as their Treasurer. In his spare time he pursues Deer Hunting!!



THE U.S. NAVY COMMISSIONED Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Kansas City (LCS 22), June 20. The ship was built by Austal USA in the Mobile River shipyard,

The Navy commissioned Kansas City via naval message due to public health safety and restrictions of large public gatherings. The Navy is looking at a future opportunity to commemorate the special event with the ship's sponsor, crew, and commissioning committee.

Kansas City is the 11th of the Independence variant to join the fleet and the second ship to be named for Kansas City.

She was launched 19 October 2018 into the Mobile River. Kansas City has been assigned to Littoral Combat Ship Squadron One.

