

**For Immediate Release:**

# **Korean War veteran Walter Ballard selected as the Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year**

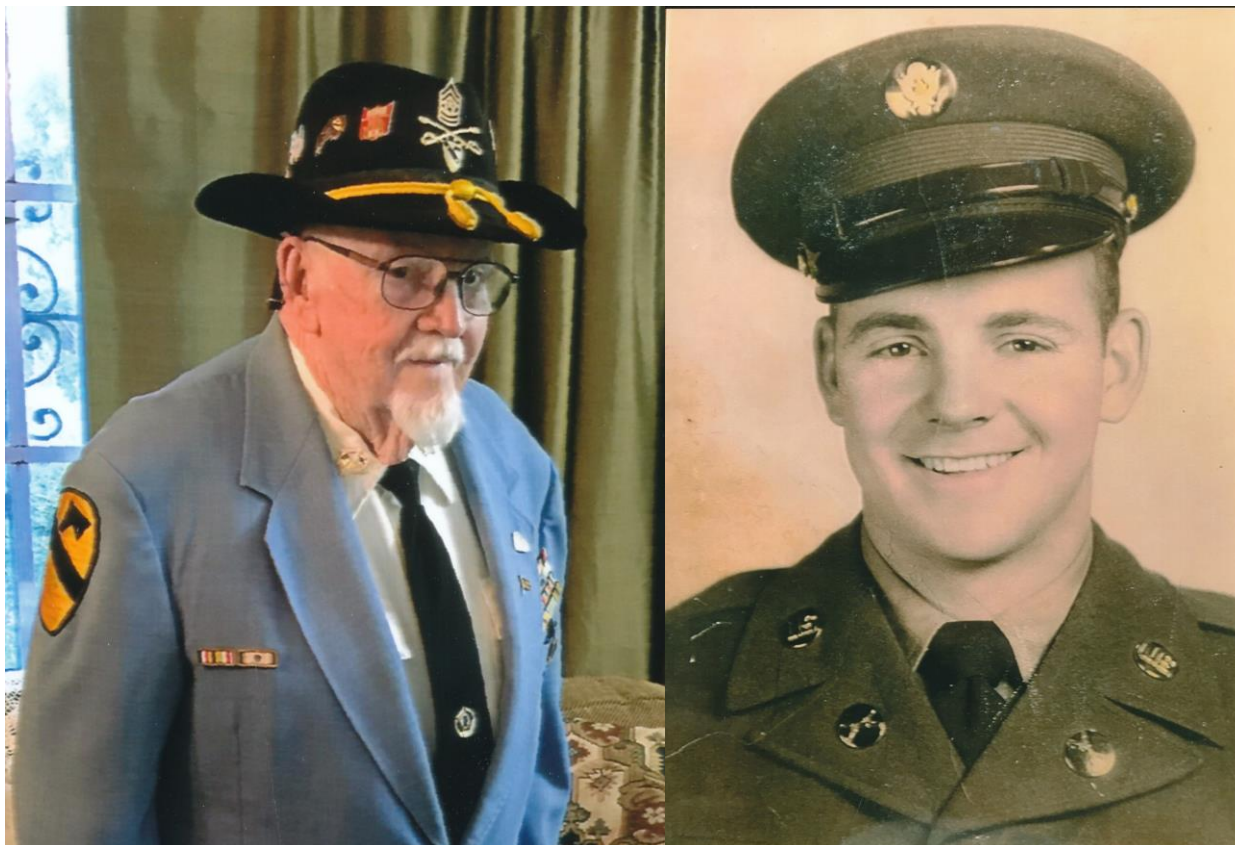


The 2018 Veteran of the Year is Walter G. Ballard. His military service began while still in high school when he enlisted in the Alabama Army National Guard as a member of Battery B, 117th Field Artillery Battalion in Andalusia, Alabama. After graduating in 1949, he volunteered for active duty and was assigned as an artilleryman to the 1st Cavalry Division stationed in Japan. By July, 1950, Ballard's unit had landed in Pohang Dong Korea and spent the next 8 months in direct combat with North Korean and Chinese forces. By Thanksgiving Day 1950 they were only 18 miles from the Chinese border.

Notified of his father's death, Corporal Ballard received a compassionate discharge and returned to the family farm. After helping his mother adjust to their new circumstances, he moved to Mobile and was hired by the Electrical Department at International Paper Company. During his 45 years with IP, he was active with Local 1315 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, serving as an officer and working to negotiate several labor contracts.

After retiring he became active in local veterans organizations, and was president of the South Alabama Veterans Council in 1999 and 2000. He was chapter president of the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association, state president for 3 terms, and was directly involved in the design and construction of the Korean War Memorial at the USS Alabama Battleship Park. From 1997 to 2005 he served in the Alabama State Defense Force rising to Command Sergeant Major of the 3rd Brigade. Ballard's awards include the Army Occupation Medal, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, and the Bravery Gold Medal of Greece.

Walter Ballard, a combat veteran of the Korean War will be recognized along with Admiral Steve Abbot during the commission's Veterans Day noon luncheon on **Monday, November 12** at Fort Whiting Armory. Reservations forms and links to online reservations are located at <http://sirmon.us/sirmon/veterans/> or the Mobile Veterans Day Facebook page. The day's events include a parade in downtown Mobile at 10 am. The USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park will be host to a Veterans Celebration and Parade of Flags at 3 pm and the Mobile Symphonic Pops Band concert beginning at 7 pm.



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For additional information about this press release or other area Veterans Day events contact:

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