

# TALES OF *Valor*

2023

IN HONOR OF OUR  
VETERANS

The Press and Standard

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Pictured Left to Right: Robert Jennings, Jonathan Brown & Charles Maness at Colleton County Fire-Rescue Headquarters

## Robert Jennings

By Scott Grooms  
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Robert Jennings is a firefighter-paramedic on Colleton County Fire-Rescue Medic 26.

He joined the United States Marine Corps in June of 2005 and had basic training at MCRD San Diego (Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego). After graduating from recruit training, he went to the school of infantry. His first unit was the Third Battalion First Marines where he deployed to Iraq. Two months later he was sent to Fallujah, came back, had two more deployments to Iraq and Ramadi. Finally in 2009, he went as a combat replacement to Afghanistan with the Second Battalion, ninth Marines.

When Jennings got out the Marine Corps he was drawn to public service, "I was pursuing a criminal justice degree. But I didn't want to do public safety. The firefighter paramedic aspect kind of drew me in because of the challenge aspect of the Paramedicine. I'm having to think on my feet, figure out what's going on with the patient. It gave me the same feeling of serving that I found in the Marine Corps."

Jennings is from Chicago and moved to the area from San Diego, "I started working for Charleston County when I first moved here, and then Berkeley County." He found out that Colleton County would put him through Fire Academy to help him train as a fireman as well.

Jennings has two daughters that likes the idea that he is a fire fighter. His oldest daughter wants to be a veterinarian with the other still deciding a career path.

When asked why he serves he says, "I've been serving since I was 18 years old, just joined the Marine Corps. I like serving is what I do. I enjoy serving others who can't help themselves."

He adds, "I try to be better than I was before this shift. I'm always trying to improve myself. I think I can take something from each person that I come in contact with on the street. It will help me learn."

## Jonathan Brown

By Scott Grooms  
sgrooms@lowcountry.com

Jonathan Brown is first generation military for his family. His father is from England and not a US Citizen. Originally military service wasn't something that Brown was drawn to as a career. He says, "I didn't know what I was doing with my life and had a buddy who had joined the Marine Corps and I decided to join the army."

Brown enlisted in February of 2008 as a military intelligence analyst and was stationed with the First Brigade, Third Infantry Division in Fort Stewart, Georgia and deployed to Baghdad, Iraq.

In military intelligence, we work in buildings that are classified with no windows and working 14 to 16 hours a day without seeing daylight and you do a lot of work that just goes under appreciated." Brown enjoyed the work a lot and while in Iraq, he re-enlisted and was assigned to Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

When Brown got out of the military and was looking at the next phase of his career, his brother, a firefighter-paramedic in Alabama, convinced him to go and take an EMT basic course just to see if I liked it. Brown explains, "My first ride along was that adrenaline rush that I had been missing since being out of the military."

Brown really enjoys working in the fire service, "After working seven years in military intelligence and never really seeing the fruits of my labor. This job allows me to see the difference that I make on a daily basis. No matter what it is, we have the opportunity to try to make their day better give them hope, and so I really just enjoy being able to make a difference, put in effort, and see the results." He also likes the interaction with the public on a day to day basis "It's always good to flip on the lights and hit the siren and give a wave and the kids just really enjoy that

Brown worked at Berkeley County EMS, where the fire department for the most part is separate from EMS.. "I love a good fire call as much as I love a good medical call. Just kind of being that that jack of all trades is something that I really love about this department. I think we're all fortunate to work for Colleton County. It's a great place to work and it's just an awesome community. We're just super fortunate to have a great team and everybody in headquarters that supports us on a daily basis. It's the best job in the world."

## Charles Maness

By Scott Grooms  
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Charles Maness is volunteer firefighter with County Colleton Fire-Rescue Station 19. Public Service has always been a part of his family, "My dad was in the service, my grandfather as well, I knew ever since I was little that I was going to serve in the military and eventually firefighting.

Maness enlisted in January of 2005. During his junior year in high school, he went to basic training that summer, then went back and finished his senior year of high school. After high school he served in the South Carolina Army National Guard and deployed to Afghanistan for a year.

He started out as a mechanic, then became a chemical, biological, radiological specialist, and is now a supply NCO in Columbia.

In 2014, he was fully certified a firefighter working in North Charleston before joining Colleton County Fire-Rescue, and then he became a federal technician for the guard.

As a volunteer Maness gets to respond to calls, and whenever he gets free time, he helps out with the community outreach with public education and fighting fires. Maness says, "A family friend was volunteering when I was 16. That's when I started to hear about volunteering, and kind of seeing the big trucks around and knowing that I can help. I want to be part of that.

It's a thrill for me to be able to help give back to people that can't do for themselves."

When asked if he always wanted to be a fire fighter he says, "Growing up in Illinois, I would see fire trucks all the time. When we moved to South Carolina we saw how much the fire service depended on volunteers.

Maness has been in the area since 1998. He is married with three kids. His daughter is an Explorer for the program for Colleton County Fire -Rescue. The Explorer program allows the younger generations to start pursuing their vision of being a firefighter, allowing them to take classes and get to learn the ropes forward to eventually being able to help actually inside the building are on the calls.

The Fire Service and Army National Guard is a big part of his life and he is all about helping people.



Tuskegee Monument Rededication Ceremony. Tuskegee Chapter saluting Second Lieutenant Eugene J Richardson, Jr. age 98

Second Lieutenant Eugene J Richardson, Jr. age 19

## Second Lieutenant Eugene J. Richardson, Jr.

By Scott Grooms  
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The Tuskegee Airmen trained in Walterboro during WWII and in 1945 a 19-Year-Old Second Lieutenant Eugene J Richardson, Jr. trained to be a fighter pilot at the Walterboro Army Airfield. Richardson who is now 98 years old, attended the rededication of the Tuskegee Airmen Monument and is now Dr. Eugene J. Richardson, Jr. said, "I came here to Walterboro after I finished the advanced flying school. Here at Walterboro, we were preparing for combat by training on the P 40 Warhawk and the P-47 Thunderbolt. The squadrons were known as the Red Tails.

Walterboro was the first training station after flight school, Richardson flew training missions twice every day. When asked what he remembers most about the base, he said, "People would line the fence of the airfield and wave to us as we flew on and off the airfield during our daily training." He also recalled that Walterboro Army Airfield also housing prisoners of War on the base during World War II.

The Tuskegee Airfield program expanded to train pilots and crew to operate two-engine B-25 medium bombers. These men became part of the second black flying group, the 477th Bombardment Group. Shortages of crew members, technicians, and equipment troubled the 477th, and World War II ended before it could be deployed overseas.

Altogether, 992 pilots graduated from the Tuskegee Airfield courses, and they flew 1,578 missions and 15,533 sorties, destroyed 261 enemy aircraft, and won more than 850 medals.



Second Lieutenant Eugene J Richardson, Jr. age 98

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HONOR,  
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Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be.  
*Douglas MacArthur*

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**Happy Veterans' Day!**

# Walterboro native serves aboard U.S. Navy floating airport

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Bryan Niegel, Navy Office of Community Outreach

SAN DIEGO - Petty Officer 2nd Class Daniel Mullen, a native of Walterboro, South Carolina, is one of more than 5,000 sailors serving aboard the self-contained mobile airport, USS Abraham Lincoln.

Equipped with a full flight deck and more than 60 aircraft including attack fighter jets and helicopters, aircraft carriers are one of the largest warships in the world.

Mullen, a 2013 North Walterboro Christian Academy graduate, joined the Navy nine years ago.

"I joined the Navy to give back to my country," said Mullen. "A country that has given liberty, freedom and opportunity to all."

Skills and values learned in the Navy are similar to those found in Walterboro.

"I worked in construction prior to joining the Navy," said Mullen. "That taught me attention to detail and to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations. These lessons have allowed me to excel in many situations during my time serving."

Aircraft carriers are the centerpiece of America's Naval forces. For more than 100 years, they have projected power, sustained sea control, bolstered deterrence, provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and maintained enduring commitments worldwide.

According to Navy officials, aircraft carriers are versatile and have unique mission capabilities that make them a more strategic asset for the Navy than fixed-site bases. They are often the first response in a global crisis because of their ability to operate freely in international waters anywhere on the world's ocean. In addition, no other weapon system can deploy and operate forward with a full-sized, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier's speed, endurance, agility and the combat capability of its air wing.

"Sailors are truly the most valuable asset on USS Abraham Lincoln," said Capt. Pete Riebe, commanding officer of USS Abraham Lincoln. "The crew has been working hard preparing the ship for deployment since I took command and I can't wait to take the team to sea so that I can see these warfighters in action."

This year commemorates 50 years of women flying in the U.S. Navy. In 1973, the first eight women began

flight school in Pensacola. One year later six of them, known as "The First Six," earned their "Wings of Gold." Over the past 50 years, the Navy has expanded its roles for women to lead and serve globally, and today women aviators project power from the sea in every type of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard aircraft. According to Navy officials, our Nation and our Navy is stronger because of their service.

With 90 percent of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to trained sailors and a strong Navy.

As a member of the Navy, Mullen is part of a world-class organization focused on maintaining maritime dominance, strengthening partnerships, increasing competitive warfighting capabilities and sustaining combat-ready forces in support of the National Defense Strategy.

"The Navy is important to national defense because we protect our country and allies from hostilities from other nations through conducting operations around the globe in the air, on land and at sea," said Mullen.

Mullen has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service.

"I'm most proud of graduating from the Small Arms Marksmanship Instructor Course," said Mullen. "I'm also proud to be able to teach other sailors how to shoot and move tactically."

As Mullen and other sailors continue to perform missions, they take pride in serving their country in the United States Navy.

"It is an honor to serve in the Navy and to be able to contribute to our nation's defense while protecting the freedom and liberties of all citizens," said Mullen.

Mullen is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

"I would like to thank my parents, Gordon and Donna, for raising me well and giving me good core values," added Mullen.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Daniel Mullen

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## Robert Tiegs

American Legion Post 93 Walterboro Adjutant, Robert (Bob) Tiegs, reported to the US Naval Station Training Facility, Great Lakes, Illinois on August 8 1969. After basic training, he was assigned to Radioman A school at Bainbridge Maryland. He successfully completed A school and was transferred to US Naval Station Key West Florida. He completed his 18 months of duty and earned the rank of E4 before being transferred to the USS Canopus AS 34, a submarine tender stationed at Holy Loch, Scotland. Petty Officer Tiegs served aboard the Canopus for 3 years and received the rank of E5 right before being transferred to the USS Simon Lake AS 33, another submarine tender stationed in Rota, Spain. He remained on board the Simon Lake in Spain for 3 years until the ship returned to the US at the Charleston Naval Base shipyard. Before leaving Spain He was promoted to the rank of E6 (Radioman 1st Class). Petty Officer Tiegs decided to end his military career at Charleston and was given an Honorable discharge on January 17, 1978.

Bob was born in Philadelphia Pennsylvania, he attended St Francis Xavier and Bishop Neumann Catholic schools and graduated in 1968. He married his childhood sweetheart Linda Grace Wagner in December 1969. Linda traveled with him to Key West, Scotland, Spain and Charleston. Their son Jeremy was born in



Robert (Bob) Tiegs from 1970 in Florida

Key West and their daughter Jennifer was born in Scotland. The Tiegs family spent 10 years in Georgia before returning to South Carolina and settled in Walterboro. In 2001, Bob earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from the University of South Carolina Aiken. He taught Elementary education at Forest Hills until his retirement in 2016. Bob has been associated with The American Legion for 18 years as a regular member, Post Commander and Adjutant. He spends much of his time serving Veterans through his associations with; The American Legion, Colleton County Veterans Council and the Elks Lodge #1988 as their Veterans representative. He works closely with the Veterans Victory House in Walterboro and the Veterans Hospital in Charleston. Bob has one grandson and three great granddaughters.

## Corporal Arthur Lee Smoak II

Corporal Arthur Lee Smoak II is originally from Smoaks, South Carolina and is a graduate of Colleton County High School Class of 2020. He is the son of Arthur and Ann Smoak. His paternal grandparents are the late Dan and Willie Mae Smoak, and his maternal grandparents are Dorothy and Joseph Goff of Walterboro. He is followed very proudly by his sister Angelia Smoak.

Currently Smoak is serving in the United States Marine Corp. He has served in Okinawa, Japan as a rifle range coach and has taught new Marines how to qualify with firearms on the range. Smoak was promoted to Corporal in charge of Heavy Equipment Quality Control. He was transferred to Tokyo, Japan to train in quality control at the heavy equipment used in the Marine Corp. Corporal Smoak plans to continue his military career and rise in the ranks during his service.

The Global War on Terrorism is still ongoing and we thank Corporal Smoak for his service to our country in order to provide the United States with a blanket of safety and assist the victims of terrorism around the world.



Corporal Arthur Lee Smoak II in formation

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Colleton County High School NJROTC cadets at Darlington Raceway in Darlington, SC

## The future veterans of the United States of America



PR1 Christopher Hutchens

The NJROTC program was established by Public Law in 1964. The program is conducted at accredited secondary schools throughout the nation, and taught by instructors who are retired Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard officers and enlisted personnel. The NJROTC accredited curriculum emphasizes citizenship and leadership development, as well as our maritime heritage, the significance of sea power, and naval topics such as the fundamentals of naval operations, seamanship, navigation and meteorology. Classroom instruction is augmented throughout the year by extra-curricular activities of community service, academic, athletic, drill and orienteering competitions, field meets, flights, visits to naval or other activities, marksmanship sports training, and physical fitness training.

The NJROTC unit at Colleton County High School (SC) began under the leadership and guidance of LCDR Charles E. Armentrout, US Navy (RET), in July of 1993. Currently, there are 160 cadets and two instructors PR1 Christopher Hutchens and NSI Chief Kenneth DeLee.

Colleton County High School's NJROTC program is in partnership with the United States Navy. The program is 60% curriculum based with labs, P.E. (allowing for a personal health credit, P.E., credit, or electives), history, marine science, and some civics. Last school year (2022-2023) three cadets received The NROTC Preparatory Scholarship allowing them to attend college at Benedict College, Illinois Institute of Technology, and San Diego University. Last year's graduating class also had three cadets commit to the National Guard, three commit to the United States Navy, and two commit to the United States Marine Corp.

The 2023-2024 Cadet Corp of 160 Cadets currently has one cadet signing with the Navy for nuclear engineering, two cadets committing to the Marine Corp, three others to the Navy, one going into aviation structural mechanics, and one as a hospital corpsman.

The NJROTC program focuses on mentorship for our high school students whether they choose to join the military or not. For those who elect to join the military the NJROTC program equips them with the tools to continue with their service making them the next generation veterans to protect our nation.



Chief Kenneth V. DeLee

# Thanks for your service, veterans!

To the heroes in our community, my team and I would like to thank you for your bravery and your sacrifice in service to our country.



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