

*This Week in Washington*



WITH CONGRESSMAN  
JO BONNER

## Navy Orders Second General Dynamics/Austal LCS

Last week, the U.S. Navy announced it was ordering a second Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) from General Dynamics and Austal USA.

This second LCS, the USS Coronado, will be similar to the USS Independence, which is nearing completion at Austal's shipyard in Mobile.

These vessels will play a crucial role in both the defense of our homeland and the protection of our forces and allies overseas, and I am proud the First District will continue to play a key role in this project.

As the nature of warfare continues to change, the LCS will prove to be a game changer, taking the fight to the enemy wherever they are in the world.

A couple of years ago, many Americans came to know Mobile as well as the stories of some of Mobile's heroic sons and daughters in Ken Burns' documentary series, "The War."

The documentary focused on the American experience of the war through the lives of people in four cities: Waterbury, Connecticut; Luverne, Minnesota; Sacramento, California; and Mobile, Alabama.

As so many of you know, during WWII, Mobile became the second largest city in Alabama. Local shipyards won contracts to build Liberty ships and destroyers.

The Alcoa plant processed millions of pounds of aluminum used to build many of the 304,000 airplanes America produced during the war; the Waterman Steamship Company boasted one of the nation's largest merchant fleets, and Mobile became one of the busiest shipping and shipbuilding ports in the nation.

Incredibly, at the height of the war, Mobile was producing one ship a week.

That spirit – that call to service – is still evident throughout Mobile today. The USS Coronado

will continue to build on this important heritage of playing an integral role in the defense of our great country.

### Alabama Veterans Visit WWII Memorial

Speaking of WWII, last week the inaugural Honor Flight South Alabama took 92 men and women from the greatest generation to Washington, D.C. to visit the National World War II Memorial.

Founded by the South Alabama Veterans Council, Honor Flight South Alabama is a very special organization whose mission is to fly heroes from Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clarke, Monroe, Covington, and Escambia counties to see their national memorial.

Over six decades have passed since the end of World War II and, regrettably, it took nearly this long to complete work on the memorial that honors the spirit and sacrifice of the 16 million who served in the U.S. armed forces and the more than 400,000 who died.

Sadly, many veterans did not live long enough to hear their country say “thank you” yet, for those veterans still living, Honor Flight provides for many their first – and perhaps only – opportunity to see the National World War II Memorial, which honors their service and sacrifice.

This Honor Flight, which marked the organization's maiden flight, began at dawn when the veterans gathered at historic Fort Whiting in Mobile and traveled to Mobile Regional Airport to board a US Airways flight to Washington.

During their time in our nation's capital, the veterans visited the World War II Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, and other memorials.

The veterans returned to Mobile Regional Airport Wednesday evening, where some 1,000 people – including high school bands, Boy Scout troops, and Azalea Trail and Dogwood Trail Maids – greeted them.

This journey of 92 men and women from south Alabama is an appropriate time for us to pause and thank them – and all of the soldiers who fought in World War II – for they collectively – and literally – saved the world from the evils of tyranny.

To a person, these men and women personify the very best America has to offer, and we should all take a moment and pay tribute to their selfless devotion to our country and the freedom we enjoy.

May we never forget their valiant deeds and tremendous sacrifices. Special thanks to the organizers, volunteers, and donors, who helped make Honor Flight South Alabama a reality.

### Jack Kemp Passes Away

Like many Americans, I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of former congressman and former secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Jack Kemp last week. Our nation lost a great patriot.

A star quarterback and the American Football League's most valuable player, Congressman Kemp was an unlikely leader of the modern conservative economic movement.

Under his leadership, across-the-board tax cuts became the central focus of the Republican Party's economic policy. He and the late Senator William Roth co-authored the tax rate reductions of President Ronald Reagan's Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, which played a key role in the party's resurgence.

Congressman Kemp's impressive career culminated when he became the Republican vice-presidential nominee in 1996. He will be deeply missed by all.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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