

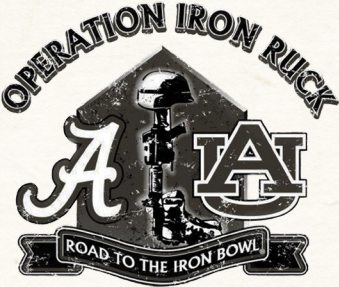
2024

OIR FIELD MANUAL 2024

OPERATION IRON RUCK

**FIELD MANUAL
ROAD TO THE IRON BOWL**

**AUBURN STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, CAMPUS VETERANS ASSOCIATION**



THE BELOW STATISTICS ARE ACCORDING TO THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS (ADVA).

**THE VETERAN POPULATION IS BATTLING
THE EPIDEMIC THAT IS VETERAN SUICIDE.**

The national suicide rate
for male veterans is
1.3 TIMES HIGHER
than the civilian average;
for female veterans it is
2.1 TIMES HIGHER.

143
VETERAN
SUICIDES
in Alabama in 2021

**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR VETERANS ANALYSIS AND STATISTICS
ESTIMATES THAT 377,310 VETERANS ARE CURRENTLY LIVING IN
ALABAMA. SINCE THE LAUNCH OF OPERATION IRON RUCK, THE
NUMBER OF DAILY VETERAN SUICIDES HAS DECLINED FROM 22 TO 17.**

71%
of suicide attempts
happen within one
hour of the decision

**Top 5 areas
where veteran suicide
is most common:**

Madison County

Alabama Gulf Coast

Birmingham Metro

Wiregrass

River Region

**OPERATION IRON RUCK IS AN IMMENSELY POWERFUL EVENT RAISING
AWARENESS OF THE VETERAN SUICIDE EPIDEMIC. THE EVENT GIVES
VETERANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A COMMUNITY AND
CONNECT WITH OTHER VETERANS.**

OIR OPERATION IRON RUCK



RUCK/RUCKSACK

A rucksack is a backpack used to carry equipment, supplies or additional weights during physical exercises.

RUCK MARCH - "RUCKING"

Rucking is a challenging exercise in which military personnel march or walk while carrying a loaded rucksack. The purpose of a ruck is to test endurance, strength and mental resilience.

RUCKER

A rucker is a person who is "rucking" in Operation Iron Ruck.



OPERATION IRON RUCK

Operation Iron Ruck (OIR) is an annual event hosted by the Auburn Student Veterans Association (ASVA) and the University of Alabama Campus Veterans Association (CVA) to raise awareness and funds for veteran suicide prevention. As the state of Alabama has one of the nation's highest veteran suicide rates, OIR seeks to increase the public's knowledge on this issue while uniting veterans with the community, funding charities, championing veteran suicide education and supporting local veteran organizations.

In 2018, Operation Iron Ruck was founded when veteran students from Auburn University and the University of Alabama decided they wanted to help their fellow veterans. Each Iron Bowl since, student veterans, veteran alumni and ROTC from both Auburn and Alabama embark on a 151-mile ruck starting at the away team's stadium and ending at the home team's stadium. The ruckers also carry the game ball to the home team's stadium ahead of each Iron Bowl.

Operation Iron Ruck is tough. It's veterans standing alongside veterans in their struggles. This event is raising awareness of the veteran suicide epidemic while also giving veterans the opportunity to create a community and connect with each other. Being around people who've had different experiences but share the same bond of being a veteran has transformed lives. Operation Iron Ruck has evolved into a major community event with numerous sponsors and hundreds of participants and volunteers.

The 2024 Operation Iron Ruck is set to be the largest and most impactful to date. Through its continued success and growth, Operation Iron Ruck reinforces ASVA's and CVA's commitment to increasing awareness of veteran suicides while working to decrease this statistic.



Veterans carry 22 lb. rucksacks and 22 nameless dog tags to honor the 22 veterans reported to take their lives by suicide each day.



*CITIES LISTED BELOW ARE KEY STOPPING POINTS ALONG THE ROUTE



OUR EVENT ROUTE



NOVEMBER 27

Depart from Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn



NOVEMBER 27

Arrive at Carrville Baptist Church in Tallassee



NOVEMBER 28 THANKSGIVING

Arrive at Marbury Highschool. Thanksgiving Dinner will take place.



NOVEMBER 29

Arrive at National Guard Armory in Centreville



NOVEMBER 29

Depart from Academy of Tuscaloosa for Bryant-Denny Stadium Ceremonial last 3 miles



NOVEMBER 29

Arrive at Bryant-Denny Stadium and handoff game ball to officials!

ABOUT US



ABOUT CVA

At the University of Alabama, the Campus Veterans Association will provide a support network for veterans, dependents and survivors; a social experience that builds on the bonds forged during service; and a voice that advocates for the military community.



ABOUT ASVA

Established in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Auburn Student Veterans Association (ASVA) serves as a beacon for military veterans transitioning into academic life at Auburn University. Drawing strength from the principles of military culture, ASVA's main mission is to bridge the gap between military service and the pursuit of higher education.

ASVA was born out of a distinct "why" – to serve as the nexus for military veterans as they navigate their new life at Auburn University. The essence of our existence revolves around two main points: fostering academic achievement and promoting integration into the Auburn community.



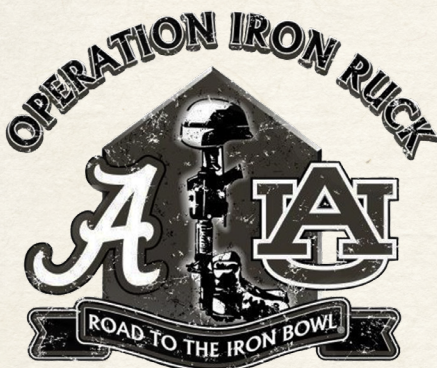
LETTER TO OUR SPONSORS

The CVA and ASVA exist to assist veterans and their family members. Currently the veteran population is battling the epidemic that is veteran suicide. Statistically 22 veterans will take their own lives today. Tomorrow 22 more will do the same. We vowed to do everything possible to end this epidemic, hence the creation of Operation Iron Ruck.

For the seventh time in the days preceding the Iron Bowl, student veterans from the CVA and ASVA will lay the Iron Bowl rivalry to the side. Together we will ruck the Iron Bowl game ball from the visiting team's stadium to the home team's stadium for presentation to the officials prior to kickoff. It's an immensely powerful symbol of cooperation between the schools for the greater good of veteran well-being.

We are giving you the opportunity to be a crucial part of this monumental undertaking, as our goal this year is to raise \$50,000. Every veteran we reach through this effort is a life saved. They will know there are people like us who truly care about them in their moment of greatest need. Your donations go toward that outreach effort as well as purchasing basic food and toiletry items for veterans currently in veteran healthcare facilities.

Thank you for walking with us in this journey and truly stepping up for veterans in need.



KEVIN COUCH
ASVA PRESIDENT

020 Foy Hall
Auburn, AL 36849
Email: kmc0215@auburn.edu

BLAKE SCHICKEL
CVA PRESIDENT

3000 Houser Hall
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
Email: beschickel@crimson.ua.edu

OUR SUPPORTS

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH MONETARY AND DISTRIBUTION OF COLLECTED ITEMS



Bill Nichols State Veterans Home

The Bill Nichols State Home is a senior living community welcoming eligible veterans. They expertly administer all current programs for veterans and their families, anticipate future needs and take appropriate action to meet those needs.



Three Hots and A Cot

Three Hots and A Cot serves those who have served. They provide a place for homeless veterans to receive the assistance they need to transition back to civilian society.



Tuskegee VA Home

The Tuskegee VA Home provides support for veterans who are or at risk of becoming homeless due to financial hardship, unemployment, addiction, depression or transition from jail.



Houston Project

Houston Project is a nonprofit organization that was created by a grieving family to help veterans and to honor their fallen son. They not only raise money for struggling veterans but also raise awareness for veteran suicide, depression, PTSD, CTE and more.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION IRON RUCK?

We encourage anyone to walk the 151-mile awareness campaign alongside us, however, because we have limited van space and supplies, we give priority to student veterans/veterans.

VOLUNTEER ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to be involved in this year's Operation Iron Ruck as a volunteer, please review the below volunteer opportunities. We rely on volunteers to make Operation Iron Ruck possible.

VAN DRIVERS

Van drivers will transport Auburn locals participating in the ruck to Tuscaloosa where the ruck will begin. Van drivers will also move ruckers between the location of their last completed leg to the beginning of their next leg along the route.

THANKSGIVING DINNER VOLUNTEERS

Operation Iron Ruck hosts a Thanksgiving dinner for all our participants. This allows our team to build camaraderie as a unit, no matter what group they are in, and celebrate togetherness during the holiday season. We need volunteers to help host, and provide the Thanksgiving meal for our participants.

CATERING AND SERVING

We provide lunch and dinner to our participants along the route. We need volunteers to sponsor and serve meals for ruckers.

MISCELLANEOUS VOLUNTEER TASKS

Volunteers will assist participants at stop points where ruckers will be resting before their next leg begins and make supply runs to local stores.

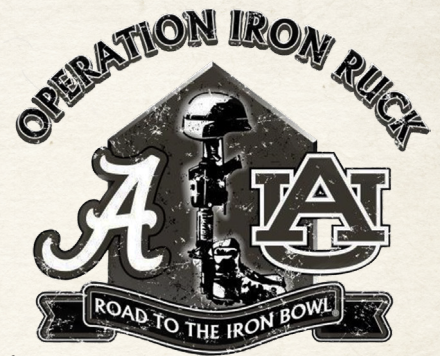
**TO VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT US AT
WARDAMNVETERANS@GMAIL.COM WITH YOUR
AVAILABILITY FOR NOVEMBER 27-30 OR SIGN
UP ON OUR WEBSITE OPERATIONIRONRUCK.COM.**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

DONATABLE ITEMS

DISTRIBUTED
TO ORGANIZATIONS



EQUIPMENT

- Hand & Body Warmers
- Industrial Grade Glow Sticks
- Basic Clothing Items
(T-Shirts, Socks, Underwear, Gloves, Coats, etc.)
- Large Duffle Bags
- Intestinal Fortitude

FIRST AID

- Isopropyl Alcohol (First Aid Antiseptic)
- Aspirin
- Ibuprofen
- Blister Bandages
- Standard Adhesive Bandages
- Antibiotic Ointment
- Gold Bond Medicated Powder
- Moleskin & Moleskin Adhesive
- Portable First Aid Kits
- Gold Bond Friction Defense Sticks

PORTABLE, NON-PERISHABLE SNACKS & DRINKS

- Beef Sticks & Beef Jerky
- Protein Bars
- Electrolyte Powders
- Bottled Water
- Sports Drinks (Gatorade, Powerade, etc.)
- Ground Coffee

HYGIENE ITEMS

- Towels
- Baby Wipes
- Deodorant
- Mouth Wash
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Hand Soap
- Body Soap
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Feminine Hygiene Items

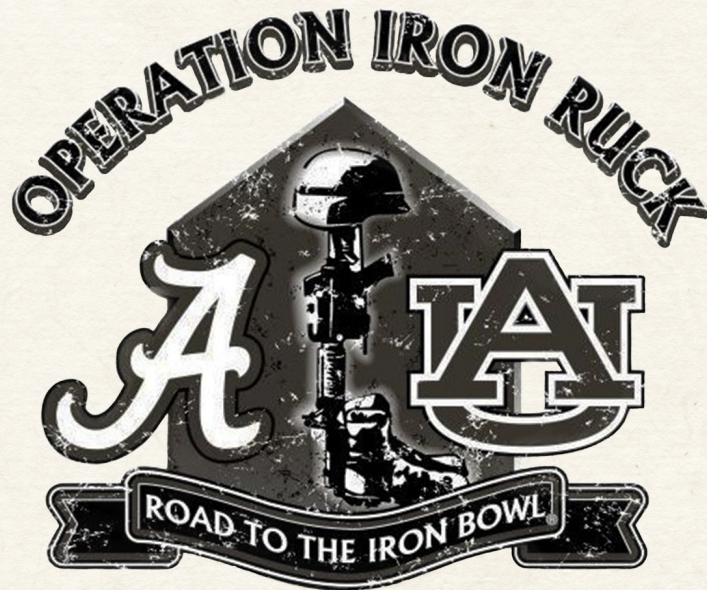


AMAZON WISH LIST





WATCH THE
OIR VIDEO
THAT APPEARED
ON ESPN



OPERATIONIRONRUCK.COM



AUBURN STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

020 Foy Hall, Auburn, AL 36849

WWW.ASVASTORE.COM

WARDAMNVETERANS@GMAIL.COM

334-844-8167



CAMPUS VETERANS ASSOCIATION

3000 Houser Hall, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

VETS.SA.UA.EDU/CVA

CVA.UALABAMA@GMAIL.COM

205-233-1890