



# The Tale Twister

## Cullman Lions Club

February 26, 2018

### Program

Lion Chris Robinson introduced our speaker, Mr. Jeremy Hogan, who talked about the organization he founded, Saving Forgotten Warriors (SFW).



(L to R) Lion Chris Robinson, Mrs. Julie & Mr. Jeremy Hogan, and Lion President Bill Ruehl.

Jeremy is a retired US Marine Sergeant, serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He started this organization when he was asked to help a single fellow veteran, who was homeless. As he became aware of the problems of adjustment to civilian life that many veterans encounter, he became an advocate in their behalf. His only real resource, initially, was his own keen desire to help. It has been estimated that there are nearly 880,000 veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the USA; on average 22 kill themselves daily; and in Alabama, there, alone, are 457 homeless veterans at any given time. The veterans, that SFW helps, come from all eras and services and all ages, whether they've served in combat or not. SFW operates in 16 north Alabama counties.

Mr. Hogan has an all-volunteer based SFW-team, with only eight working full-time. In its first year SFW provided help to 109 veterans, and 309 since its inception. The organization's goal to has been to provide a single-source location to enable veterans get the proper care and support and successfully traverse all the red tape required by the VA health system; it also helps in gaining Post 9-11 GI Bill benefits, helps with career development, and helps with a multitude of therapy programs. It is dedicated to helping and teaching our heroes how to cope with the lingering stresses of war, finding a job, and financial instability associated with this transfer from a soldier's life. Jeremy says that SFW will help when no one else will. And it shows all veterans that they are appreciated. The assistance for veterans that SFW provides is not just talk and paperwork. It constructs handicap ramps, cuts grass & does yardwork, refurbishes homes, does grocery shopping, provides transportation services, and puts veterans in touch with other community charitable organizations. Jeremy has welcomed veterans to live in his own home while helping to establish them in proper housing.

Mr. Hogan says that help begins after the SFW performs an in-house assessment of a veteran's needs, but that this help is not necessarily intended to be a lifetime of assistance. Once a veteran gets back on his feet with his life stabilized, he will be expected to function on his own. This is because the needs are so great, and resources are limited -- SFW cannot do otherwise. SFW conducts several



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functions each year to raise funds on its own. The next one is a “Swamp John’s” dinner on March 6<sup>th</sup> at their office on Peachtree St. near the intersection of Hwy 157 & Hwy 31.

Mainly because of the difficulty in finding adequate housing for the large number of homeless veterans, SFW has big plans to develop a ranch to accommodate 120 veterans on 200 acres. This ranch will not only provide housing, but address specific issues such as PTSD, drug & alcohol dependency, and traumatic brain injury.

This organization is doing admirable work in helping our veterans under Mr. Hogan’s leadership. You can read more on their Facebook page @savingforgottenwarriors.

### Other Business

Lion Clark Rainwater’s mother, Jean, has suffered a slight stroke, and is undergoing therapy at the Hanceville Nursing Home.

Lion Jim Searcy’s wife, Wilna, has just passed. Arrangements will be announced.

Lions Lummie Speakman and Tom Pfeifer received Silver Centennial Membership pins for sponsoring new members.

Lion Carey Thompson distributed work assignments for the Fish and Ham dinner. A meeting was held with the Fish and Ham Committee Chairmen.

The Club received a “Thank You” note from Cullman Caring for Kids for the Club’s donation.

The annual “Shred-a-thon” will be held April 7<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm near Buffalo Wild Wings on Highway 31.

The MD-34 annual convention will be held in Guntersville April 27<sup>th</sup> through April 29<sup>th</sup>. A wish list for toys and other items to support a children’s drive which will be collected at the convention was sent by email.

MD-35A District Convention will be March 16-17 at Joe Wheeler State Park.

### Upcoming Programs and Events

March 5: Mr. Doug Long from Cullman Shooting Sports.

March 16-17: The MD 34-A Convention.

April 7: Shred-a-thon.

April 27-29: MD 34 Convention.

### Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings.