

S.C. Military Veterans Hall of Fame inductee delivers invocation at close of SC7 Expedition

Prayer delivered by retired Marine colonel and three-time Hall of Famer aboard USS Yorktown

MOUNT PLEASANT, SC, UNITED STATES, July 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Col. Steve Vitali, USMC (Ret.), delivered a stirring invocation before gathered dignitaries and SC7 Expedition leaders and participants aboard the decommissioned aircraft-carrier USS Yorktown anchored along the shores of Mt. Pleasant, S.C. at Patriots Point, Wednesday, July 29.

Part of SC7's closing ceremonies following the expedition's annual 30-day trek from the mountains in the Upstate, through the Midlands, and finally the Lowcountry; Vitali – who himself hiked a portion of the near 300-mile route through the Palmetto State said: "None of this since July 1st and in previous years would be possible without the grace and blessings of Almighty God Whom we now turn to in expressed gratitude."

VITALI'S INVOCATION FOLLOWS:

"Almighty God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – we come to you now with full hearts and renewed spirits: Full in the sense that we've all been blessed – and we feel that deep sense of blessing – by the lived experiences and fellowship we've enjoyed for the past four weeks. Renewed in the sense that on-trail and off-trail experiences have – as in previous years – given us something impossible to adequately describe, but we all know the richness of that which we now feel.

"Through You, we have reinforced and renewed our love for the natural world; the world You have created and given us dominion and responsibility over; the world which our friend and expedition leader Dr. Tom Mullikin has so aptly Christened 'Your Garden.' In his exact words; 'The Lord's Garden.'



Col. Steve Vitali, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.) is a recent inductee in the S.C. Military Veterans Hall of Fame.

"And a magnificent garden it is: From the mountains to the sea. How blessed we are by you, Lord, in that this natural world (your garden) has been manifested to us across the great state we call home: This Palmetto State which our forebears recognized as a pristine heaven on earth; and which so many of those same forebears endured near unfathomable hardship as they struggled to settle, cultivate, conserve, protect, and defend these seven geographic wonders we now enjoy and far too often take for granted.

"God, we pray that you continue to instill in the hearts of all of us, this very desire we feel today to conserve, protect, and defend your garden for our children, grandchildren, and untold numbers-of-generations of South Carolinians yet to come.

"God, thank you for the leadership of the SC7 team, for all those who have joined us along the trail, and for the grandeur and magnificence of all that which we are (and have been) surrounded by. Like Dr. Mullikin, many of us have traveled the globe. Many of us have ventured to some of the world's most remote destinations in peace and in war. We have seen and experienced the beauty and fragility of that which you have created and entrusted to us. And through those experiences we have grown to realize that there truly is "no place like home."

"Lord, please continue to bless our home, our families, our friends, our blessed Palmetto State and our nation which this year celebrates its 250th birthday.



Participants in SC7 2026 are pictured in the Congaree National Park. Col. Steve Vitali is front and center with grandson Liam. Standing just behind them and to the right is Dr. Tom Mullikin, SCDNR director and SC7 leader.



Michelle McCollum, pres. of the S.C. National Heritage Corridor; S.C. Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette; and SC7 leader Dr. Tom Mullikin during a previous year's SC7.

“May we never divert our attention away from our inherited responsibility to all. May we – in the spirit of my own Marine Corps – be “ALWAYS FAITHFUL” in these things and in our responsibility to them. We ask these things in Jesus’ Holy name and through the power of the Holy Spirit. – Amen”

ABOUT SC7 –

A partnership between the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), the S.C. National Heritage Corridor, and Global Eco Adventures, the seventh-annual SC7 Expedition, from the mountains to the sea, serves to educate participants, inform the same, create a greater public awareness of, and ultimately protect South Carolina’s sterling natural environs by highlighting the Palmetto State’s seven geographic wonders (therefore SC7); including Sassafras Mountain, the Jocassee Gorges, the Chattooga River, the Congaree National Park, the Edisto River, the ACE (Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto) Basin, and Bulls Island as well as other geographic destinations showcasing – and creating awareness of – the state’s “extraordinary environmental beauty and ecological importance,” says Dr. Tom Mullikin, director of SCDNR and SC7’s expedition leader.

ABOUT COLONEL STEVE VITALI –

A career U.S. Marine officer and veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Col. Steve Vitali was recently inducted into the S.C. Military Veterans Hall of Fame (Class of 2026). He is also an inductee in both the S.C. Black Belt Hall of Fame and the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame.

For more information about SC7, visit – <https://southcarolina7.com/>

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