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By **RUSS HENDERSON**
Staff Reporter

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Parades in Fairhope and Foley on Saturday will kick off four days of Veterans Day celebrations planned by cities and schools across Baldwin County.

In Fairhope, this year's annual Veterans Day parade will be headed up by Bob Fass, a retired Army Special Forces major, city officials said. And if parents bring along their children as hoped, the veterans groups marching behind Fass will be joined by dozens of kids on bicycles, in wagons and on foot.

"Our goal as always is an old-fashioned, small-town parade, Norman-Rockwell style," said Joe Birindelli, the parade's chief organizer. Awards will be presented to the best-dressed child and the best-decorated bicycle, tricycle or wagon, he said.

The City Council named Fass the city's "Veteran of the Year" last week. Fass served in the Army from 1963 to 1975, including 3cm HALF tours in Vietnam plus participation in operations in Cambodia, the Dominican Republic and Nigeria.

Fass is an active volunteer with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, handling hundreds of cases for south Alabama veterans who have filed disability claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He is the VFW's service officer for areas from Montgomery to Baldwin County, he said.

Fass is specially qualified to help wounded veterans. During his service, Fass received four Purple Hearts, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star and the Bronze Star of Valor.

"I was shot through my right hand, bayoneted in the right leg, got shrapnel in the right side of my face and shot through the right leg," Fass said.

"Everything happened on the right side."

The gunshot through his leg required multiple surgeries, and while at the VA hospital, he said, "I started seeing young people throwing away their uniforms and all their paperwork as they were leaving. They clearly didn't plan on filing for their benefits."

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