

THE CALEDONIAN-RECORD

Our Heroes

Honoring WWII Veterans

Veterans Day,
November 11, 2016

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■ REGINALD ALEXANDER ■ ROBERT WHITNEY ■ ROGER EMERY ■ WALTER BERRY

IN HONOR OF OUR WWII HEROES

FROM THE WRITER ...

We are losing our World War II veterans at a rate of more than 1,000 a day.

With each loss, we lose that veteran's stories forever.

In many instances, the veterans were unable to speak to the horrors they witnessed, and had to commit, in the defense of our country during World War II.

This spring, The Caledonian-Record's executive editor, Dana Gray, tasked me and our top photographer, Paul Hayes, with locating, interviewing and photographing as many living World War II veterans as we could find in the vast twin-state territory of Northern New Hampshire and Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

We put advertisements in the Caledonian-Record and our two sister editions in New Hampshire and in Orleans County, asking veterans to participate in our project; we also reached out to veterans' organizations.

Quickly, our list grew and grew, to dozens of names.

We began our project in June at the Coos County Nursing Hospital in West Stewartstown, New Hampshire, where we interviewed residents of the nursing home and nearby community members. We witnessed the poignant encounters of veterans who had known of one another for decades in some instances, but never met.

Many brought photos of themselves from their war days, medals, draft and discharge papers, and souvenirs from where they served; some were able to share memories in heartbreaking detail, others had little memory of their service days, but were eager to participate and share what they could.

Sadly, as Paul and I criss-crossed the countryside, setting up events to interview veterans at local VFWs and American Legions, nursing homes, and private homes, there were veterans we didn't meet in time.

We were hoping to interview David Reed, who was at the Greensboro Nursing Home, on the day we traveled north to Craftsbury and Newport.

While interviewing veterans in Craftsbury, we got a phone call from Mr. Reed's daughter saying he had been hospitalized.

Not long after we learned through the veterans' post in Hardwick that Mr. Reed, who had been at Iwo Jima, had died. He was being given a sendoff with honors by his friends in the military here in the Northeast Kingdom.

We traveled from Newport to Island Pond, Lyndonville to St. Johnsbury, North Haverhill to Littleton and Lancaster, and a few more small towns in New Hampshire and Vermont, when veterans were unable to make it to our interviewing and photography events.

The Veterans Administration estimates that the number of living World War II veterans will be 446,000 on Sept. 30, 2018, and about 57,000 by Sept. 30, 2025.

We had the privilege to hear the stories of one man, an Army Ranger with the 99th Division, who helped to liberate Holocaust camps and witnessed firsthand the unspeakable acts carried out by the Nazis in Germany and other parts of Europe. Another veteran, too, witnessed the dead and dismembered outside a just-liberated Holocaust camp and can remember little else but that horrid image seared into his memory all his life.

Veterans told us their stories from the Battle of the Bulge, Okinawa, Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima and more. We heard the stories of Navy mine sweepers, Army infantrymen, Marines who stormed islands in the battles leading up to the surrender by Japan after the dropping of the bombs, and more.

Over and over, we were told that the war was not between the people, but the governments, and there was sentiment from all the veterans that there be no more war. Sadly, the war to end all wars did not do that, many observed.

Asked about being part of The Greatest Generation, several pointed to veterans who lost their lives in other wars - World War I and Vietnam. One Iwo Jima veteran said the nurses and medics who tried to save the wounded are the real unsung heroes of the war.

Many back home contributed to the war effort, too, and are not always remembered in history with as much appreciation as they should be, veterans reminded us.

As a daughter of a World War II veteran, these heroes will always hold a special place in my heart.

My late father, Melvin T. Ash, was in the Navy during World War II, in the Lion 8 - Land Invasion Occupational Navy unit attached to the first Marine division at Okinawa.

After the Japanese surrendered, my father volunteered to help with recovery and identification at Pearl Harbor.

I interviewed my own dad in 2000, for The Hartford Courant, and he shared this with me, words we included in his obituary in March of 2010, "In late August and after the Japanese surrendered, I learned there was a need for regular Navy men for deep sea and underwater salvage. I volunteered, passed a tough physical. I didn't smoke or drink, which helped, and in mid-September of 1945, the C-47 lifted off from Yontan Air Field and swung over the long green island that looked like such a peaceful setting in the China Sea and headed east to Guam. I was about ready to finally be in the real Navy as our destination was the U.S. Submarine Base at Oahu Hawaii Dive School. I looked back at Okinawa. I had been lucky. I was alive. Many were not, and they were young, too, like me. I was just 19."

For the freedoms we enjoy today, thank you to The Greatest Generation, thank you to those who defended our freedom before World War II and after, and thank you to those who continue to serve our nation.

Amy Ash Nixon
Staff Writer



All photos in this publication by Paul Hayes

EDITOR'S NOTE

This Veterans Day we express heartfelt gratitude to active military men and women and all those who served in the past. Thank you for your willingness to serve our country at home and abroad.

Men and women from our region have always stepped up to meet the call of military service. Veterans and those still enlisted for duty are all around us. Find at least one of them today and thank them.

In this Veterans Day publication we offer an extra special thank you to WWII Veterans. They are from our country's "Greatest Generation." Their contributions to this nation and to the world cannot be overstated: Nazism and its maniacal dictator destroyed. Mass executions of innocents ended. Imperialism denied.

Democracy preserved at home and across the globe.

With the passage of time since their acts of war-time heroism, their numbers dwindle daily. We couldn't let another year go by without seeking out those WWII Veterans still among us and making the stories of their service available to our readership. Our efforts led us to the 44 men and two women we feature today in this publication. We are privileged to have met with most of them face to face and listened to their stories. We are very pleased to share those stories with our readers.

Dana Gray
Executive Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Caledonian-Record is indebted to a number of community helpers who assisted us as we gathered veterans across a vast territory of five counties in two states to be interviewed and photographed.

We began our interviews at the Coos County Nursing Hospital, where staff allowed us to use a community room and we gathered a large number of North Country World War II veterans together.

There, two representatives of the Canaan Historical Society, Chairman Dennis Fuller and Walter Noyes, the society's veteran liaison, assisted us in contacting veterans, arranging for the nursing facility to host our interviews, and helping the reporter and photographer with many details.

We had help at a handful more nursing homes, too, and extend our thanks to the staffs of: the Bel-Aire Quality Care Center in Newport, the Craftsbury Community Care Center, and Country Village Center in Lancaster, New Hampshire.

Also participating were veterans posts from the Ralph J. Mollica Post 793 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in St. Johnsbury to the Lyndon VFW Post 10038, the American Legion Post 80 in Island Pond, the VFW in Littleton, and the Reginald Hunt Post #20 in Woodsville and the American Legion Post 7 in Hardwick.

We wish to thank all the post commanders and officers who helped us by allowing us to interview and photograph World War II veterans at their facilities, and in some cases, who helped us to locate and reach out to veterans in their communities.

At the Ralph J. Mollica Post in St. Johnsbury, we were helped by Commander Bob Holmes,

Quarter Master Reg Guertin and the post's staff.

In Lyndon, at Post 10038 of the VFW, Commander Edward-Paul Jarrosak and Sr. Vice Donald Young assisted us in reaching out to veterans, and allowing us to use the post for interviews. We also were permitted to take several veterans' portraits at a local business, the Lyndon Freighthouse Market and Cafe, where staff were accommodating and helpful.

Likewise, at American Legion Ross Wood Post 20 in Woodsville, we were helped by Commander Bob Williams and Sargent at Arms Walt Dellinger. In Littleton, past commander of the VFW Post 816 Dan Greenlaw helped us.

In Hardwick, at the American Legion Post 7, Commander George Gattone helped us locate World War II veterans and opened up the post for our interviews.

In Island Pond, American Legion Post 80 manager Michele Leclerc helped us with names of veterans, and welcomed us to the post for interviews.

In Craftsbury, Ron Sanville, a Caledonian-Record reader, assisted us with finding veterans of World War II in that community, including in nursing facilities in the community.

We also thank the many friends, neighbors and family members who submitted the names of local World War II veterans for our project.

Regrettably, as we worked through the great response we received, several of the World War II veterans in our area passed away, and several we attempted to meet with were not well enough for interviews, or unable to recall their service memories, family members told us.

Meeting and interviewing nearly 50 veterans of World War II has been an honor and a privilege.

REGINALD ALEXANDER

DOB 4-19-1925
NEWPORT, VT
UNITED STATES NAVY

Reginald Alexander, born in Rutland, VT, was drafted in April of his senior year at Rutland High School. He was sent to Philadelphia, Pa., and to the U.S.S. Miami, just being built, at the Cramp Shipyard, he said. The ship was commissioned on Dec. 26, 1943, “and was my home for 29 months.”

A number of years ago, when the ship was dismantled, every member of the crew still alive was sent a plank from the U.S.S. Miami, a piece of teak wood that carries deep memories.

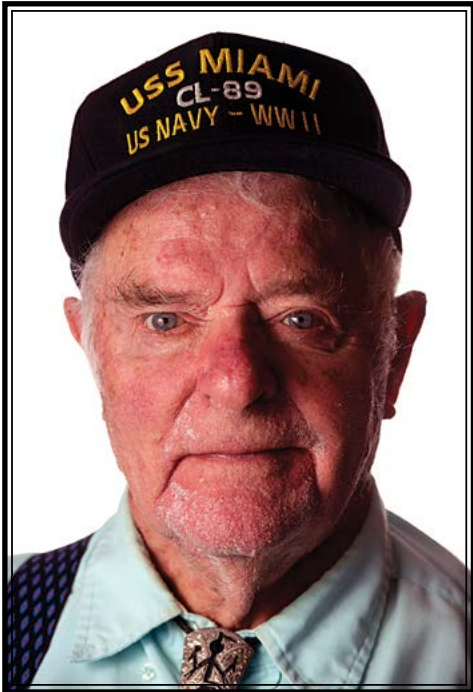
Alexander said he looks back on his service during World War II “as a great experience and a great part of history.”

One day in his Navy days, Alexander was called to dress and appear topside on the ship at 5:30 a.m.

“We did and we were at dock, and a flatbed truck was parked alongside with a piano on it. An announcement came and it said that Diana Shore was there to sing to us. She sure did!” recalled Alexander. He said the singer wanted to come on board the ship after singing, but there was concern about letting an attractive, famous woman on board the ship.

“We had not seen a female in 13 months!” Alexander recalled.

Alexander still has a thick scrap book filled with photos and a log book he kept to record memories. He kept track



of ships being struck all around his ship, which fortunately was spared. He still has menus from Christmas and Thanksgiving days on the ship.

He also has a Navy cookbook, with amounts for huge numbers of men.

When Alexander returned home for a short break before deploying overseas, he was afraid he might never see his family again, with all the kamikaze action the U.S. Navy ships were encountering. After he had gone, he received a letter from his mother that his father had died of a heart attack at 43.

Alexander was a good swimmer and diver. Once, when his ship was given time for swimming, he dove off the ship, which was up about 30-40 feet. He remembers going down, down, down, and almost

not making it back up. He never dove off the ship again, he said, having learned how far gravity sent him down into the sea.

Alexander said he is grateful to have made it home safely, and to have been blessed with 68 years of marriage and “four great kids.”

He’s grateful, he said, “That I’m not going to spend much more time in the world, the way the world is going, if someone doesn’t fix it!”

FRANK ALLARD

DOB 5-16-1927
ISLAND POND, VT
UNITED STATES NAVY

Frank Allard was born in the United States, but spent his formative years in Quebec, Canada. His sister had a boyfriend in the Canadian Navy, and Allard was struck by the uniforms, he said.

He inquired about joining the service, and ended up at the Portland Custom House, in Maine, where he signed up for the U.S. Navy Reserves at 17.

His parents had to sign for him to enter, given his age. He was sent to the U.S. Naval Training Center in Sampson, NY.

After a few weeks, he was off to California, then he boarded a Liberty ship, the USS Vulcan, and shipped out with about 2,500 troops on a 28-day journey to Okinawa.

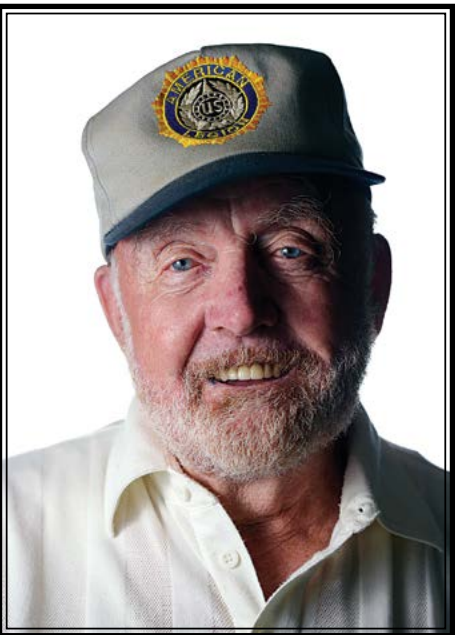
“We were the first troops to go in,” he said. Their job was to sweep the sea for mines ahead of the approaching troops.

Allard said he was mainly on the ship, and he was in Japan when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The ship came through Pearl Harbor on its return route, coming through the Panama Canal and arriving in Brooklyn, NY on April 15, 1946.

Serving during World War II was what most young people were eager to do, said Allard. “I wanted to go, it was quite an experience,” he said, “especially when you are so young.”

Back home, men, women and children also served the war effort to support the troops and the nation, said Allard. “It was a beautiful thing; we were all very country-minded,” he said of the patriotism at the time.

“You need to support your country,” he said. “I never regretted it,” he said of his service. “We didn’t see ourselves as occupation, but as liberators,” he said of the war. “We felt that we liberated them.”



EARL AREMBURG

DOB 9-11-1926
HAVERHILL, NH
UNITED STATES NAVY

Earl Aremburg quit school at age 17 to join the Navy and train at Newport, R.I. From there, he was sent to gunnery school in Norfolk, VA, and was put on a Liberty ship out of Norfolk loaded with armed troops.

Their ship traveled to the Mediterranean, to North Africa, then Naples and Sicily, Italy. He was down under for most of his Naval service, and out of harm’s way, Aremburg said. His ship unloaded supplies and went for more for supporting the troops, and they took German prisoners aboard at one stop and brought them to Africa, he recalled.

The ship transported everything from battle equipment like tankers, to food and grains for the troops to survive. His ship was part of a convoy of 100 ships, and he said it took them 30 days to make it to the Mediterranean, then another 10 days to their first assignment.

His ship was fortunate and not struck, but Aremburg witnessed others that were. “None of my ships were ever hit, but we lost a lot of ships, a lot of men,” he said. “A lot of people were killed.”

He was aboard the SS Hannis Taylor. The ship navigated

around Japan, Panama, to Pearl Harbor and to the Phillipines on its mission, reaching Okinawa. Aremburg’s job was fireman, first class.

Aremburg was one of 11 children. He and two of his brothers all joined the service during World War II, he said, showing a newspaper photo from long ago with all three of their photos on it. His older brother was killed in Germany serving in the Army, he said, and his other brother made it home from the Navy.

He and his Navy brother were home on leave when his parents got the notice that his brother, 22-year-old Sgt. Raymond Aremburg, was missing in action. A little more than a week later, they learned he was killed in action.

“It makes you feel good,” said Aremburg of being a World War II veteran and a member of the Greatest Generation.

Aremburg pointed out his own German surname, and shook his head, “The German people...how they let a guy like Hitler tell them what to do...”

He closed his eyes at the horror.





ROBERT BALL

DOB 3-24-1924
FRANCONIA, NH
UNITED STATES ARMY

Robert Ball, a Franconia native, was living in his hometown when he enlisted in the United States Army on his 19th birthday. He was sent to Camp Croft, South Carolina, for his basic training, then to Camp Hale in Colorado as a member of the 10th Mountain Division. They deployed to Italy on Jan. 4, 1945, he said.

"I volunteered to serve because I felt it was not only my duty to do so, but I wanted to help my country in any way that I could," Ball said. "I was pleased to learn that my skills as a skier could be put to good use as a member of the 10th Mountain Division."

Ball was struck by a bullet in his leg, and was transported to a field hospital, then to a rehabilitation unit.

Upon being released, Ball learned that he would be reassigned to a service unit.

"I was so determined and so committed to returning to Company L of the 85th Division that I packed my duffel bag and hitchhiked, with convoys heading north, back to my company," recalled Ball. "When I presented myself to my company commander, he said, 'Why you S.O.B., you are A.W.O.L.!' And I replied, 'No, Captain, I'm not. I'm HERE!' He contacted headquarters and they allowed me to stay. I had returned to my company."

Of his service in World War II, and being a member of The Greatest Generation, Ball said, "I feel proud, I feel honored, and I am humbled to have served with people who cared so much, not only for their country, but also for one another."

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It's been more than 70 years since Kenneth Barrett lay in a foxhole overlooking city of Heilbronn all night, his arms around his friend George Smith, who had been shot by German gunfire. It was the night before the United States Army's 100th Division, 397th Infantry, Company B, first squad, prepared to take the city.

A native of St. Johnsbury, Barrett now 90, said he was "a poor country boy" of 18, from a family of 15 children, when he entered World War II. Three of the Barrett sons - Kenneth, Herbert and Bill - went to battle in the war.

Everything about his service is committed to memory: the date he enlisted - Jan. 18, 1943; his dog tag numbers - 31456910; as well as the images of friends he lost right in front of his eyes.

"I was just a kid, and we were poor people," said Barrett. He went from Vermont to Fort Devens, Mass., to start his Army training, then off to Georgia and North Carolina before being sent to France then Germany. Barrett's transport ship, the George Washington, was under siege by German gunfire as it came into harbor.

The captain of his ship was able to steer clear and save the men on his ship temporarily. Thousands of others faced slaughter coming to shore, he said.

"Men were being killed as they were getting off the boats, the Germans were shelling and bombing us," Barrett said.

His unit came in later.

"We went in at night and went all through there, zig-zagging, and hitting different hot spots, to get the Germans out," he recalled. "We dug foxholes where we could and we were bunched together, we never had tents or anything."

The night in Heilbronn was a night that Barrett will take to his own grave, he said through tears. Their location was discovered and shot up starting that afternoon. His buddy died in the foxhole that night.

"The Germans found out we were there and they just let all hell break loose. They bombed the hell out of us until dark." They lay in the foxhole all night, until Barrett could crawl to the next nearest one, where two other Army friends let him squish in with them, and find safety laying

KENNETH BARRETT

DOB 1-18-1926

SUTTON, VT

UNITED STATES ARMY



across their legs in the tight space.

That night his captain was injured and Barrett had to take over the whole squad. He even met General George Patten, he said. "He came up in a Jeep all dressed up, not a speck of dirt on him," he said. He asked Barrett his name, rank and serial number, which he dutifully reported.

A squad leader with his company, Barrett never envisioned he would end up having to make the decisions for the men who survived the night in Heilbronn, but that's what he had to do.

"The next day, we took [Heilbronn]," Barrett said.

They captured countless German soldiers. "They'd had enough," he said. "I took what few men I had left in a tank and we headed to Frankfurt."

On their way, they came under surprise attack and Barrett was struck in the chest with shrapnel that literally cut his binoculars off his chest. He was shot in the elbow and rolled under the tank, where the driver knew he was taking refuge, he said. "The tank drove right over me. I thought I was squished to death," he said. Barrett rolled into the ditch.

"My neck was bleeding, a bullet went through my elbow," Barrett said. But the tank had shielded him and his men helped protect him and bring him to safety.

"Quite a few minutes later, a medic came," Barrett said. He was first brought to a field hospital where he was operated on, then to France, then to the United States, where he recuperated in an Army hospital in Staten Island, N. Y. "I was there for five or six months in the hospital, quite a bit of time," he said.

When he was in the hospital in England, there was another man who had lost both his legs. "The mail man came in and he got a 'Dear John,' letter, that his wife was leaving him." He said he still can't forget how sorry he felt for the young soldier.

Barrett was injured on April 21, 1945. A year to the day later, he married Helen.

One of Barrett's friends in the war was Charlie Conway, who was shot through the head next to Barrett. As he was dying in Barrett's arms, Conway made a request.

"If you make it, Ken, go see my wife in Rutland, Vermont,"

Conway said. Barrett visited Conway's wife, his mother, and his young child whom he had never met. "He was a good soldier," he told them.

Today Barrett remembers all the men he met and served with during World War II. "I was just a country boy, but I grew up fast. You grow up fast. You really do. I was right on the front lines the whole time, until I got hit."

Barrett said, "The good Lord brought me home."

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WALTER BERRY

**DOB 4-4-1925
LITTLETON, NH
UNITED STATES NAVY**

A St. Johnsbury native, Walter Berry today is a resident of the Riverglen House in Littleton. He left high school at St. Johnsbury Academy to enter the service, and trained at the Sampson, N.Y., Naval Training Base.

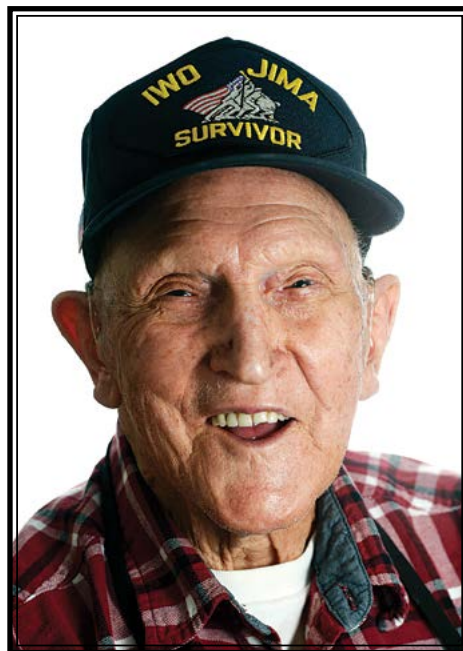
Berry would go on to serve aboard the USS Alaska, where the first two-plus years of his time on the ship was as a third class signalman, perched above the gunners. He said the signalmen used flags and lights and were human speedometers, essentially, helping to communicate speeds and directions to others in the fleets.

There were different flags to communicate messages with, and each flag meant something different, he said.

Berry said his hearing has never been the same since the war, citing his close position to the guns fired at the enemy as a likely reason. For the final leg of his time in the Navy, Berry worked as the ship's tailor, sewing uniforms and flags, and working under deck, he said.

He was aboard the USS Alaska the entire time, "That was my home for four years," he said, showing a yearbook of his crew and their experiences along the way, as well as medals he earned for his service. In 2013, his granddaughter accompanied him on an Honor Flight to see the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., and he has a photo scrapbook to show the special trip, which he said meant a great deal to him.

The USS Alaska was in the South Pacific, and took part in the historic battles at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, said Berry.



"Oh, I guess it was crazy! I was on one of the lucky ships," he said, because it was never hit. "Our ship was a brand new one, with 2,300 men on it."

Berry said he doesn't like to talk about the war, and doesn't remember everything. "There's nothing good to remember," he says, "All the things we saw weren't good."

"I just prayed to the Lord that I got home," and he did. "Like Roosevelt said, war is hell, but we won it, that's the good part of it."



CLIFFORD BIRON

**DOB 7-29-1925
ISLAND POND, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY**

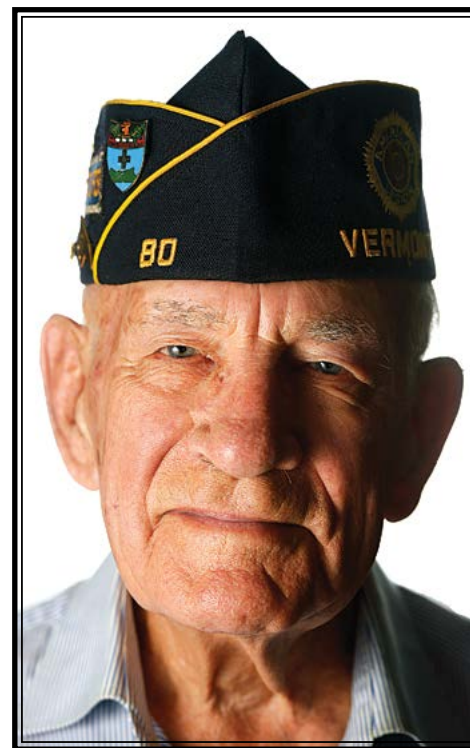
Clifford Biron grew up in Norton, and was drafted into the United States Army, entering the service on Halloween day, 1944. He was sent to Ft. Devens, then Camp Blanding, Florida, before being shipped out to the Pacific from California.

The passage took 31 days, and the ship sailed out of San Francisco, California. Biron still remembers walking the gang plank to board the ship that would take him across the sea with thousands of other men. The song the live band was playing as he boarded the ship was ironic: *Sentimental Journey*.

Another thing he remembers was that the food on the ship, "wasn't like mother's cooking!"

They got off the ship on Sept. 10, 1945, 71 years ago, he pointed out, almost to the day he was interviewed at the American Legion Post 80 in Island Pond.

The United States had dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan on Aug. 6, 1945, then three days later, another atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan. On Aug. 15, 1945, Japan



surrendered to the Allied Forces, ending World War II.

Biron's ship set sail from California four days before the surrender.

When Biron and the troops boarded that day in San Francisco, he said, "No one knew whether the Japanese were going to surrender or not."

Biron ended up in the Philippines, where he was assigned to work at the Manila Leave Center. His job was mainly office work, filing name cards, and serving as the official mail carrier for the leave center there.

In one photo from that time, a little creature can be seen on top of the Jeep which Biron drove while in the Philippines.

It was a monkey, Biron said.

One day he said, the monkey bit him, and he had to get a tetanus shot!

Biron has several medals presented to him, including the Philippine Independence Medal and the Asia Pacific Campaign Medal, among others.

"I was fortunate enough to come home by plane," said Biron.

KENNETH BROWN SR.

**DOB 6-5-1918
EAST HARDWICK, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY**

Kenneth Brown Sr. grew up in South Wheelock and was living in Greensboro when he was drafted to the Army at age 21.

Before going overseas, Brown's division was stationed on Cape Cod, where they performed duties for the Coast Guard, he said, watching the shoreline of Cape Cod for enemy boats coming near the U.S. coastline. Once, a German ship was spotted and U.S. troops sank it, and most civilians thought there had been an earthquake off the coast. It was better for keeping the peace that people not know how close a German ship had come to the U.S. soil, said Brown.

Brown was with Co. F, the 26th Infantry Division of the 101st Infantry Regiment, landing in France at Cherbourg and Utah Beach on Sept. 7, 1944.

A blimp followed their ship on the 21-day journey. "I guess they were spotting for Germans," he said. They also encountered what they thought was an enemy ship, but turned out to be a whale.

Brown was a platoon sergeant when they landed in Normandy. A second lieutenant ordered his platoon to advance toward a group of Germans shooting at them in an open field. "I should have shot him," Brown said.

He wanted to come at the enemy from a place where they had some protection. Instead, he lost

three quarters of his 50 men. "I should have had him court marshaled. We got captured," Brown said.

It was in that battle that Brown himself took a bullet through the knee. He spent the night holed up in a hole left by a bomb, a shell hole. He made himself a tourniquet and kept releasing it now and then to let the blood flow. Eventually, fearing he would die otherwise, he tried to make it out to the river for help. It was then that he was captured as a prisoner of war.

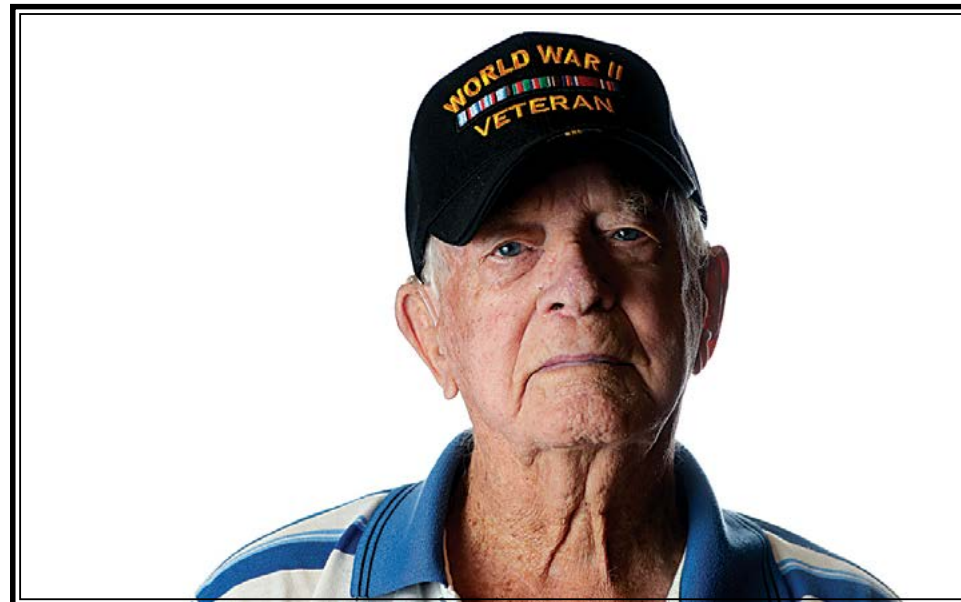
"A Polish kid captured me," said Brown. "He carried me on his back up to the farm house. All that was there was one German, and the farmer." The German kept pouring liquor into Brown's mouth. At first he spat it out, suspicious it might be poison. But the soldier was drinking out of the same bottle, so eventually he drank it as well.

The Polish soldier told him, "This war won't last long."

The German officer asked him "What did Roosevelt want war with the Germans for?"

They took him by horse and buggy to a train with many Germans who had been shot. He remembered that many of the Germans had been shot from the waist up, while most of the Americans seemed to have been shot from the waist down.

He ended up at an emergency outpost. A wom-



an informed him that he needed surgery and asked if he had anyone in the United States they should contact. He gave a note to someone for his wife.

"Dear Dot, I've been captured. I'm OK. Love Ken," he said. He did not tell her he had been shot.

"I never did really go into a hospital," said Brown. He was kept in a church; after it was bombed, they were moved multiple times, finally ending up in Nuremberg. He was a POW for about seven months.

The day he and the other POWs were freed, he said, "They called it emancipation. We walked out of the gate, it must have been a factory. We were put on a U.S. plane to France, and they fed us five times a day."

Brown made it back to Boston, where he began hitchhiking. As luck would have it, a milk truck from Newport, Vermont, picked him up and brought him all the way to his sister's house in Wheelock. "My sister took me home."

That he made it home in one piece after all the bloodshed he witnessed, Brown said, "I say my prayers every night for it."

Brown said he hopes the younger generations remember that "Freedom isn't free. A lot of people died. You have to fight to be free if there is a war."

"They said it would be the end of the wars," he said of World War II. "But it didn't end up that way."

JOHN BISSON

**DOB 7-18-1926
ST. JOHNSBURY, VT
U.S. ARMY & AIR FORCE**

John A. Bisson moved to St. Johnsbury from Berlin, N.H. when he was 14.

As a freshman in Graham Newell's history class at St. Johnsbury Academy, Bisson remembers Newell telling the class immediately after Dec. 7, 1941, that what had happened at Pearl Harbor would mean big things to them - and the world.

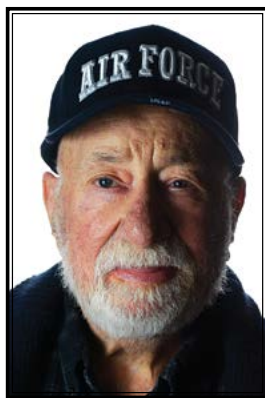
"Mark well this day," Bisson recalls Newell saying to his students after the attack on Pearl Harbor. "Because it will have a profound impact on your life."

Bisson, interviewed about his World War II service at the VFW in St. Johnsbury, said, "And it did."

At 18, Bisson was drafted into the Army. The Air Force was a branch of the Army at the time, and he went through basic training, then to the factory school of Boeing in Seattle, Washington, where he was trained as an airline mechanic. He served for three years as a flight engineer at the end of the war.

Bisson said he never did get to work on B-29s after all that training, but his experience with planes was put to good use in Korea and Japan at the tail end of the war, and after.

About half-way through his time in the service, the



Air Force became its own branch of the service, and he was part of efforts to help Korea build up an airline of its own which was the precursor to today's Korean Air, he said.

Bisson worked in air transport all over Asia, he said, flying all over Asia transporting troops as needed, mail, liquor and fresh food.

"They were always happy to see us," he said of the flights he was part of, assisting the military in ground efforts after the war had ended, but American troops remained behind to help civilians on the ground.

A number of the 18 planes in the squadron Bisson served with ended up in crashes, mainly because runways were not long enough, but his never crashed, he said.

When Bisson arrived at a base in Kimpo, Japan, he said there was a huge Fairbanks scale there, and he said, "I feel right at home!"

Of World War II, Bisson said, "It really was a battle to save civilization because if Hitler had his way and the Japanese had their way, it would be a different world."

Serving was without question for the young Americans at the time, said Bisson, "It was a very patriotic generation."

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REV. ARNOLD BROWN

DOB 11-28-1926
CRAFTSBURY, VT
UNITED STATES NAVY

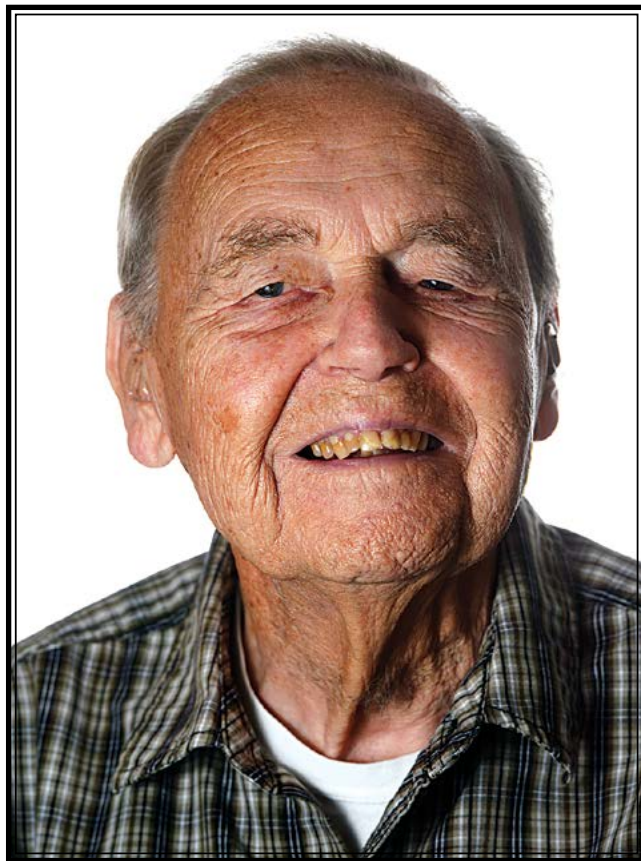
Arnold Brown was drafted into service by the man who would become his future father-in-law. He was "fresh out of high school," when he went into the United States Navy at age 18.

He was sent to the Asian Pacific Theater at the Naval Air Base in Honolulu, Hawaii. He said the troops knew the war was winding down.

"It was good to know we were near the end of the war," he said. "We were relieved when the bombs were dropped so we were pleased we didn't have to replace the 3rd fleet."

Brown said he has never forgotten friends he lost.

"The mentality of war is in the national consciousness," Brown said. "We have been at war continuously since 1941. It does not sound so great when you look at how we have fallen short with race, poverty and crime."



CLAYTON BUMP

DOB 3-21-1926
WHEELOCK, VT
U.S. NAVY

Clayton Bump served aboard the USS Bogue during his service in the United States Navy. He enlisted in 1943, his senior year of high school, in Connecticut, where he grew up.

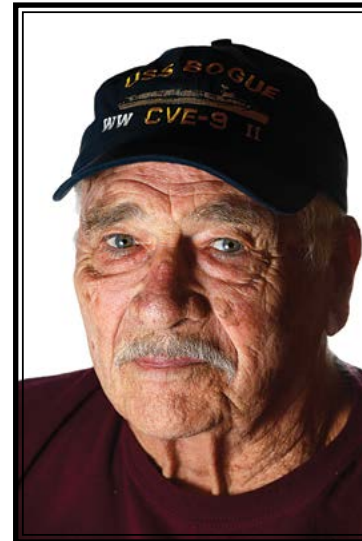
"I was overseas when I graduated," said Bump. "I was in a battle in the Atlantic Ocean, burying guys out to sea."

Bump's ship was engaged in the years-long Battle of the Atlantic, the war's longest continuous military campaign, keeping shipping lanes open in the Atlantic.

Bump has photos of himself on the ship's deck with German POWs. "The Germans had a lot of U-boats raising heck," and they often took on POWs after seizing an enemy ship.

Bump said his ship was a converted tanker, which was a small aircraft carrier, and it had four escorts and destroyers.

"We carried a bunch of small planes," he said. When enemy subs were detected, the planes "would dive bomb them." His ship carried 12 torpedoes and 12 fighters on board.



The ship traversed the seas, going into the Mediterranean, and patrolling off France at times, said Bump. "There were a lot of submarines out there," he recalled.

He also traveled through the Philippines into Saipan. "We went right through Tokyo right after they dropped the bomb."

Aircraft that took off from Bump's ship were credited with sinking 11 German and two Japanese submarines, and the Bogue is credited in history as the most successful anti-submarine carrier in World War II.

Bump and his three brothers all went into World War II, as did his four brother-in-laws. "Everybody was in the service," he said.

"They say Hitler was bad, you should have seen what the Japanese did to people," said Bump. "They killed thousands of Chinese."

He witnessed many atrocities, including a man whose tongue was cut out because he would not talk. "They were animals, too," he said of what the Japanese did during the war. "But nobody ever talks about that."

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DONALD BUSCHMAN

DOB 8-29-23
DERBY LINE, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY

Donald “Don” Buschman, a native of Manhattan, New York, moved to the Northeast Kingdom as a young man and has lived most of his life here. He served in the United States Army Americal Division, in the artillery.

“I was in the Samoa Islands, in the Phillipines and with some of the first troops in Japan,” said Buschman, who is reserved about speaking about his combat experiences during World War II. His buddy, Joe Queenin (see page 24) said, “You went through hell in the Phillipines.”

Buschman had been part of ROTC in college at Cornell before he left to enlist in the Army. He was deployed to the Pacific Theater. He was a sergeant and a forward observer, carrying the radio equipment on his back and com-

municating to those behind him what he saw, telling them when they could bring the guns up behind the artillery.

Asked about being a member of The Greatest Generation, Buschman shook his head, and said, “I don’t think we were the greatest generation. I think the guys that really had it tough were the guys that came out of Vietnam. The country did not back them like they did us, the country did not back them up.”

“We might not have liked the service, we bitched like hell, but it was something that everybody did,” Buschman said of his Army days. “We came home and we were treated well; our parents were proud of us,” he said.

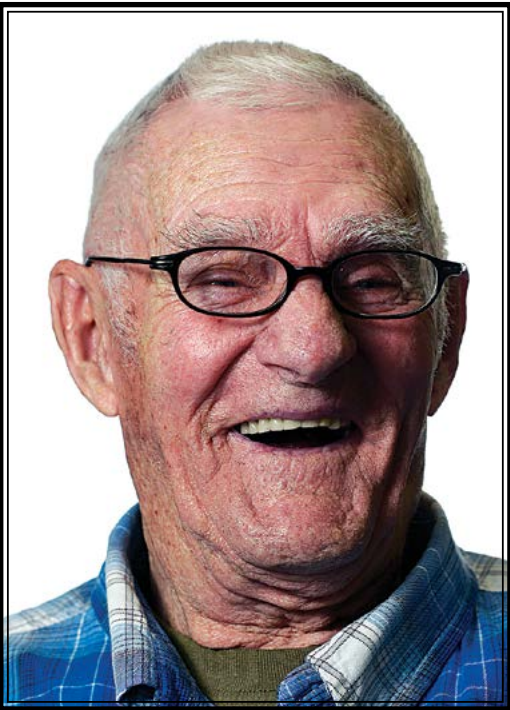
The war, he said, “It was bad...It was a chance to do something for the country.”

HOWARD CARNEY

DOB 5-15-1927
STEWARTSTOWN, N.H.
UNITED STATES ARMY

“I was in my last year of high school and I got into a little trouble with the principal, so I quit and went into the service,” recalled Howard Carney, a native of Stewartstown. He was drafted at 17 ½, and entered the Army on Aug. 15, 1943. After training he was shipped to Nuremburg, Germany.

Carney was there during the Nuremburg Trials, serving as a guard for the military in the 1st Infantry Division, he said. He did not get into see the trials, but stood guard outside during the famous trials.



“I always pitied the poor German people,” said Carney, of those who felt they had to go along with the horrors the Nazis orchestrated. “I mean either you kill or we’ll kill you. That’s wicked, I think.”

When asked to share something he could not forget about his service in World War II, Carney closed his eyes and shook his head. “I hate talking about it,” he said. “Some things, you leave well enough alone.”

Asked what it means to be a member of The Greatest Generation, Carney said, “It was an honor – we all served with pride. We were taught to serve our country.”

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GEORGE CARR

DOB 7-12-1925

CANAAN, NH

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Carr enlisted in the Marines the day after he graduated from Canaan High School.

He was injured in a plane crash in a training exercise with the Marine Air Force, he said, and spent much of the summer of 1944 in the hospital. He said he was able to get out of the hospital in time for his father's funeral that summer. He served three years, all stateside.

"I remember mostly the accident I had in the Marine Corps," he said.

JOHN CASAGRANDE

DOB 9-6-1927

PEACHAM, VT

UNITED STATES ARMY

John G. Casagrande left college at Rutgers University when he was drafted into the infantry of the United States Army. He was trained as a pilot, serving in the 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron, with the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Casagrande flew toward the end of the war, missing battle with the enemy, but poised to serve. Though it was the final chapter of the war, the pilots flew missions and trained constantly and were ready for action.

"I went to Europe when the Berlin Wall went up, we almost went into World War Three at that time," he said.

He was based in Germany for about a year and a half, flying over the country's oil fields and keeping watch. He also flew to several other locations during the war, including Greece. He later flew in France and North Africa.

"I was drafted into the million-man Army," Casagrande said. "And then the atomic bomb was used, so the million man army concept that they had for invading Japan was scrapped, and that ended the war, so I went back to college. He graduated from Syracuse University.

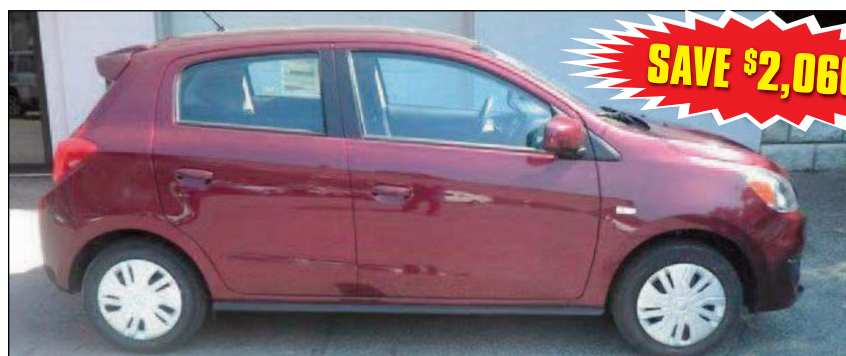
Casagrande said he remembers seeing the huge holes from cannon fire and bombings in Verdun, France which he would fly over, remnants of World War I, that still scarred the land and were a haunting reminder of the magnitude of casualties from war. "I think they lost something like two million men there, it really makes people think about this stuff," he said.

"It feels good, to have people appreciate the sacrifices that were made," said Casagrande.

After college, Casagrande, enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he was a pilot flying fighters for 27 years before retiring.



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MADELINE CHAFFEE

DOB 1-4-1920

EAST RYEGATE, VT

UNITED STATES NAVY – CIVIL AIR PATROL

Madeline Batten Chaffee had barely begun her tour at Pearl Harbor when the Pacific Island's peace was shattered on Dec. 7, 1941.

The 21-year-old Navy parachute rigger was eating breakfast when Japanese bombing began, shortly before 8 a.m.

Chaffee and her co-patriots ran out of the mess hall, looked up, and saw the sky had turned black with fighter planes. The infamous two-hour attack was underway.

It's hard for Chaffee, who turned 96 on Jan. 4, to reach into her memory. It's not that she has forgotten, she explains. It's just difficult to face the memories.

Still, the longtime East Ryegate resident insists, "I'd go back in the service in a minute."

Chaffee spent five years in Pearl Harbor and followed that assignment with volunteer service in the Civil Air Patrol.

Born Madeline Chase on Jan. 4, 1920 in Watertown, Massachusetts, Chaffee was a young woman ahead of her time. She spent her formative years, she says, "growing up on the street with a bunch of boys."

After high school, she attended Boston University and went on to become a high school science teacher. She was working in a private school teaching anatomy and biology when the war broke out. She felt a call to serve in the military and, against

her parents wishes, enlisted.

"I felt I was needed," said Chaffee. "My poor parents were so upset."

"Fifteen of us were sent over to Pearl Harbor to see if we could take overseas training," said Chaffee of herself and the women she oversaw. She said the women were treated with a great deal of respect by their fellow enlisted men. "They just treated us like part of the team," she said.

Pearl Harbor was remote and rustic, with small thatched roof huts and no real buildings. When they arrived on the island, they were presented with beautiful leis in traditional Hawaiian style, she said.

The women arrived approximately 24 hours before the Pearl Harbor bombing began.

"We were having breakfast and all of a sudden, the sirens and everything went off."

Initially the stunned sailors thought it was a training exercise. But when they saw the planes, and three ships being bombed, they knew they were at war.

"We stood there and watched... What could we do?" Chaffee asked. "It was terrible."

From the shore, they could see sailors trying to save friends and shipmates. The bombing lasted fewer than two hours but it felt like a lifetime, Chaffee said. The rescuers became victims themselves as wave after wave of bombs fell.

"War is awful. It changes you," Chaffee said. "I

was not the same girl when I came back as when I went."

During her five years at Pearl Harbor, Chaffee would go up on missions searching for enemy submarines from the sky.

She was still at Pearl Harbor when the war was declared over, and watched from the sidelines as Japanese and U.S. dignitaries signed documents declaring the war was over.

She recalls a lot of celebrating.

Looking back, Chaffee said, is difficult. But, she said, "If I were able to, I would do it again."

Even in the face of the devastation, and the time after the horrifying Dec. 7 attack, the men and women who were stationed at Pearl Harbor were steadfast, she said, determined to be unified, to be strong, to not let their nation or their mission down.

"They were together and no one was going to do anything to us," she said of the fortitude and determination and strength they possessed. "Those young guys were afraid of nothing."



LIONEL DAIGNEAULT

DOB 5-2-1925

ST. JOHNSBURY, VT

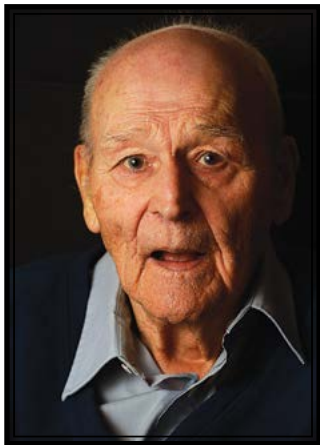
UNITED STATES NAVY - SEABEES

Lionel Daigneault was of draft age, he said, so he "traveled to Rutland to the enlistment office, and signed up for the Navy." He went to basic training in Williamsburg, Virginia, and was in the Seabees in the Navy. He was stationed at a large naval base on New Caledonia Island, and was trained as a crane operator.

"I just headed out, like the rest of them," he said. "I felt proud and important to serve my country."

The United States and France were on good terms and the island, he said, was owned by France. Born in Capelton, Canada, Daigneault said, "They were French-speaking, so I felt comfortable there. Most of the other Marines and Army were deployed for six months; I was there for a year-and-a-half."

Once, while operating a crane, he had a close call. "I had a load and was swinging it around to where I had to drop it and one of the chiefs came along in his Jeep and got too close as I turned, and



I tore off half his top! He wasn't hurt. I don't remember, but I am sure I got in trouble. They allowed me to keep training and I had a crew of four working for me and ran the Northwest 60 crane."

He also remembered that his good friend from back home, Paul Larose, also in the Navy, surprised him by visiting him on the French island. "He told his superiors I was his half-brother so he could come see me for two days. I got called to the radio shack and was thinking, 'I don't have a half brother...' But I was

glad to see him!"

Daigneault said some 40 years after the war, he was at the VA hospital in White River Junction, and met a man who had been in the Air Force and was also stationed at New Caledonia Island. "We probably knew each other," he said.

"The Greatest Generation?" Daigneault said. "I don't really think of it that way. I was just doing my job, I guess."

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DONALD DROWN

**DOB 3-6-1924
WHEELOCK, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY**

Donald Drown was born in Barton and raised in Sutton. Today, he resides in Wheelock.

He enlisted in the Army at age 18 and was deployed to Saipan.

"It was your duty to serve and an honor to do it," said Drown, who emphasized several times that it is difficult for him to talk about the war, and he does not often speak about his service; his eyes teared up more than once as he worked to share some of his memories. "Everybody was going; you just knew you had to do it."

"I can remember a news commentator talking to troops, telling how he had been all over Germany not getting a scratch," he said. The reporter was killed a few days later in Saipan.

"It was a pretty island, it was pretty well civilized. They didn't want to fight – they had to," Drown said of Saipan. The invasion of the island has seared itself into Drown's psyche. He shook his head, "All I remember is killing Japanese."

Drown somehow escaped injury. "I was very lucky," he said.

Both sides, he said, saw "a lot of kids, young men," killing each other, and losing their lives.

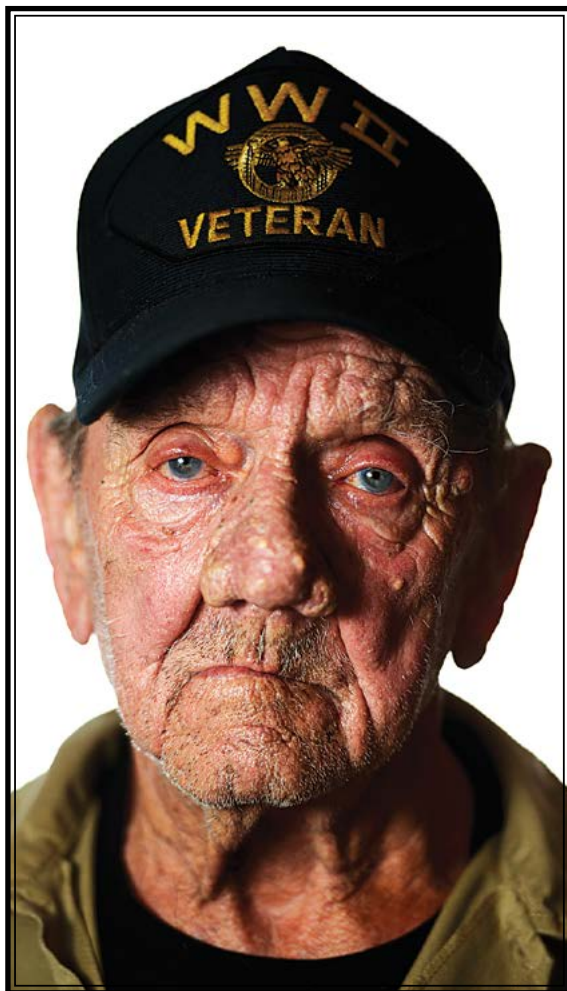
"I never talk about it," he said. "So many men died."

"You could hear the bullets snap going by your head," he said. Making it home to Vermont in one piece, he said, "was just plain luck."

What he lived through, he termed "mass murder."

"It was unspeakable," Drown said of the battles he engaged in as a teenager, barely out of high school. "I hate it."

When they landed on the island the first morning, about 4 a.m., Drown said, "The first hundred yards were the hardest, pushing the Japs back."



Drown was overseas for four years, serving the entire time in the Pacific theater. After Saipan, Drown went on to fight at Okinawa and also at Iwo Jima, engaging in some of the bloodiest battles during the war, where casualties were immense.

"I was there when they dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima," said Drown. He was also there when the Japanese surrendered, standing at attention with a long line of servicemen during the surrender under "the hot, boiling sun," with General MacArthur seated during the event.

When he was not in combat, Drown was an airplane mechanic during his time in the service.



JACK DEKOEYER

**DOB 7-21-1927
SUGAR HILL, NH
UNITED STATES NAVY**

Jack DeKoeper was 17, and living in New Jersey, when he enlisted in the United States Navy.

"When I first went in, I was just a third class sailor, and I gradually worked up in about a year and a half to be the store-keeper. I ran the ship's store with clothing and everything else," said DeKoeper. He served aboard the USS Webster 2.

DeKoeper went into the service in the fall of 1944, and his ship was at Pearl Harbor, Guam, the Marshall Islands, and other locations, he said.

"Pear Harbor, they were of course, hit in December of 1941, so we were there in '44, and of course the ships that were sunk with the sailors inside them were still there," said DeKoeper.

When there was a little time off, the sailors would get to swim and go ashore to get a case of beer, off the Marshall Islands, "and get sunburned!"

The ship DeKoeper served on went into Tokyo Bay shortly after the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan's surrender.

"Probably a week later, they had a bunch of Navy ships go into Tokyo Bay," recalled DeKoeper.

DeKoeper said there was nothing left standing, and there were "...just poor people, and they were roasting chestnuts in a barrel, that's what they were eating. We just spent the day in Tokyo, looking around, but there wasn't nothing left there to look at."

The ship was in the Tokyo Bay harbor for a couple of weeks, he said.

"It wasn't the people, the people didn't have anything," DeKoeper said of his time on land in Japan after the end of the war. "We didn't get to see any of the people who were running the war, it was all officers."

His ship escaped battle and he was fortunate, said DeKoeper.

"We knew we were fighting for a cause, and I was fortunate enough not to get into it really...they were still active, they just weren't active where we were," DeKoeper said.

Overall, DeKoeper said, the trip was an adventure for him at the age of 18, and he got to see a lot of the world at a young age.

"I have mostly good memories," he said. "I think if it was 1946 or so they got me out on what they called points...the war was over and you had acquired so many points being overseas, and they turned us loose!"

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ROGER EMERY

DOB 8-29-1925
LANCASTER, NH
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Roger Emery grew up in Littleton, and went into the Marine Corps. He joined one of his older brothers, Rodney, who was exempt from the draft (because he worked at a defense company) but volunteered nonetheless.

“He got sick of people looking at a healthy young man not in the service,” recalled Emery. “He gave up his deferment and went into the service.” After training, his brother went one way and he went another - they didn’t send brothers to the same deployment.

Emery went into the 5th Marine Division which was forming at Camp Pendleton.

“We probably were the most well-trained division in the Marine Corps,” said Emery. The division had a full year of training before they were sent into Iwo Jima, he said, “...so we were very fortunate.”

Much of that training was on the Big Island of Hawaii.

The unit traveled by convoy from Pearl Harbor to Iwo Jima, and Emery was part of the full 26-day battle at Iwo Jima to conquer the island.

“We lost many of our men,” said Emery, his eyes filling with tears, but unable to share too many memories of the more than month-long fight. “When they raised the first flag on Iwo Jima on Japanese soil...when that went up, I looked up and saw that, and that was the proudest day of my life,” he said, beginning to cry.

The 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions were all part of the battle at Iwo Jima, and were supported by the United States Navy Seabees, he said.

Iwo Jima, said Emery, was the only battle in which Seabees landed with assault troops during World War II, attached to Marine Corps divisions.

In 1989, a group of North Country Iwo Jima veterans organized a group and they have met for the past quarter century, said Emery. At that

time, the group was 50 strong, and today, there are only five Iwo Jima veterans remaining. The group’s next meeting will be its final one, and then they will disband, said Emery. He now shares a room with his wife at a nursing home in Lancaster.

Emery has a snake tattoo encircling one of his wrists, a tattoo he got in Pearl Harbor in 1944. “A Chinese girl put it on me, she was probably 19 or 20,” he said.

All five of the Emery boys were in World War II, he said with pride; he is the only one of the six siblings, five boys and one girl, still alive.

Despite his reluctance to dig too deep into his memories, he shared a story about his friend Angus MacPherson.

“We were passing by the Marine Corps cemetery on Iwo Jima and they were preparing to bury Marines. They had the Marines all lined up like cord wood...covered in blankets. My friend from Boston and I had bought combat boots in Honolulu together, and when I was walked by that pile, I spotted those boots of his. I knew he had been killed, but seeing his boots there...that was the saddest day of my life.”

“It broke my heart,” Emery said of seeing his friend’s combat boots, which matched his own, that day, among the dead.

The war had many unsung heroes, said Emery, including the homefront, and the medical personnel who came to the aid of the wounded. After the Seabees put the airport on Iwo Jima back in working order at the battle’s end, and the Navy hospital planes began coming in, trying to save the wounded on the fields, the heroism of the medics and nurses is something Emery said he’ll never forget, watching them “...picking up the wounded and flying them out... they are some of the unsung heroes of the war.”

“You talk about heroes...all kinds of heroes were there,” he said.

FRANCIS DEMUTH

DOB 5-2-1925
LISBON, NH
UNITED STATES NAVY

Francis Demuth was born and raised in Rhode Island. He volunteered to serve in the Navy in April of 1943.

He enlisted at 17 with his parents’ permission. He wanted to choose his branch of the service, and if he waited until he was 18 and was drafted, he would not have a choice.

Demuth was on the U.S.S. Dortch in the South Pacific, and was aboard his destroyer through many of the famous battles in the Pacific theater. He was at the battle of Iwo Jima and was part of the fleet that defeated the Japanese in the Philippines. He was a ship fitter, making repairs to the ship wherever needed.

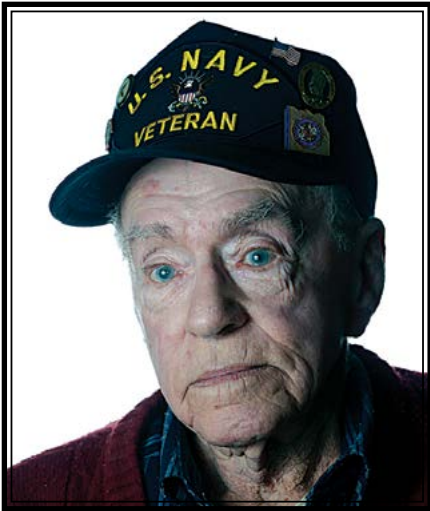
Serving in World War II, said Demuth, helped to keep America safe, and he was part of the mission to defeat the Japanese.

Demuth remembers encountering the Japanese suicide bombers in the Pacific, saying, “That raised hell for us, and was a little scary, but we managed to survive and carry on.”

“The Japanese did what they did to us, and we said, ‘Hey, you’re not continuing this, we’re going to stop you!’” said Demuth.

Demuth’s ship was a destroyer, he said, adding with a laugh, “So I’m a tin can sailor, as they called us!”

Demuth said, “It was quite a trip, and there was a hell of a lot in between,” he said of the



three years he served in the war.

His destroyer was lucky, said Demuth, “We only lost five men.”

Demuth was on a ship that accompanied the USS Missouri into Tokyo Bay where the Instrument of Surrender was signed, marking the end of World War II.

The signing took place on the deck of USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945.

The war was a long time ago, and the history “...keeps getting pushed back farther and farther, and the generation keeps decreasing,” said Demuth.

Being a part of the Greatest Generation, he said, is a feeling of honor for him still.

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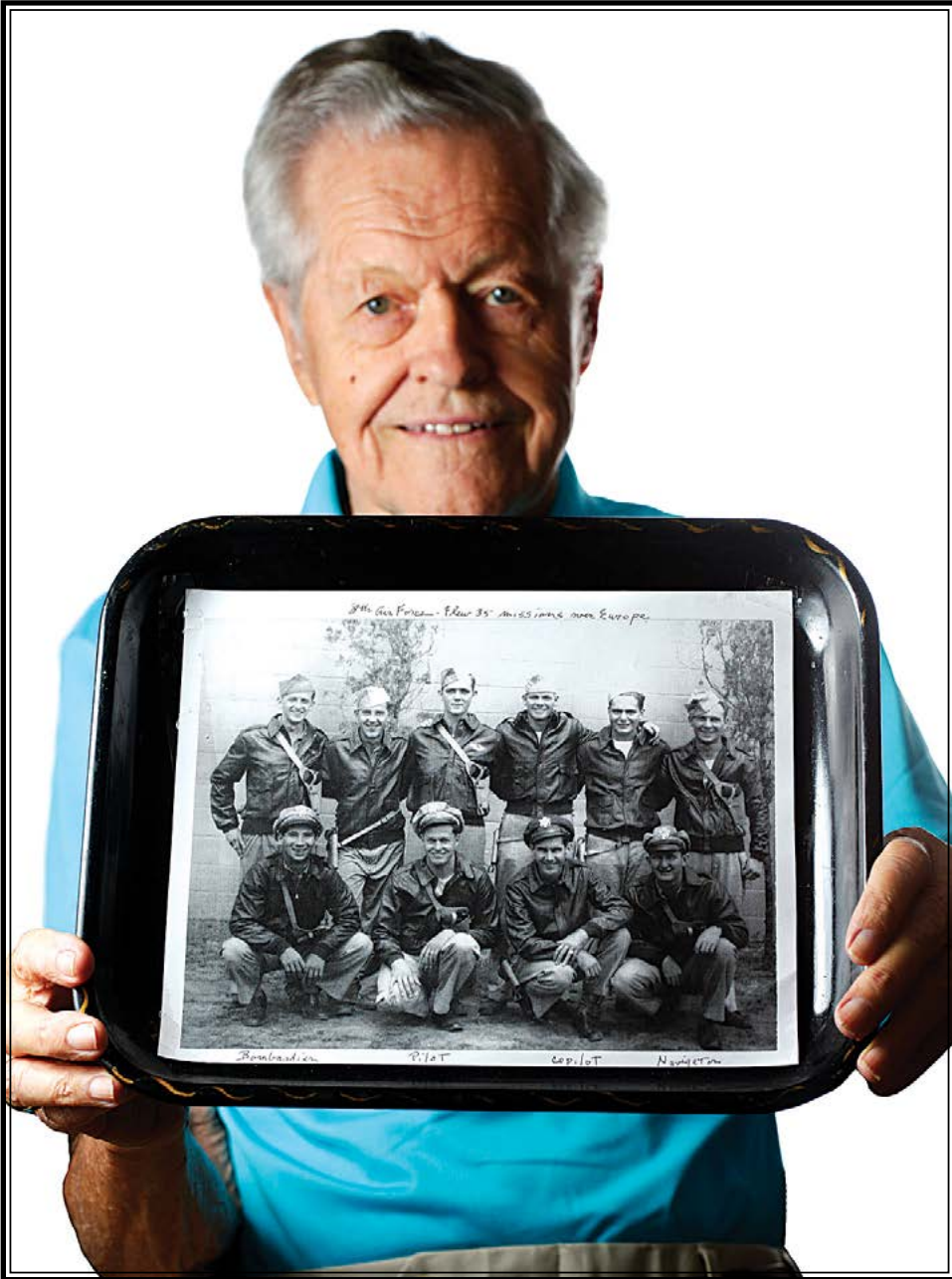
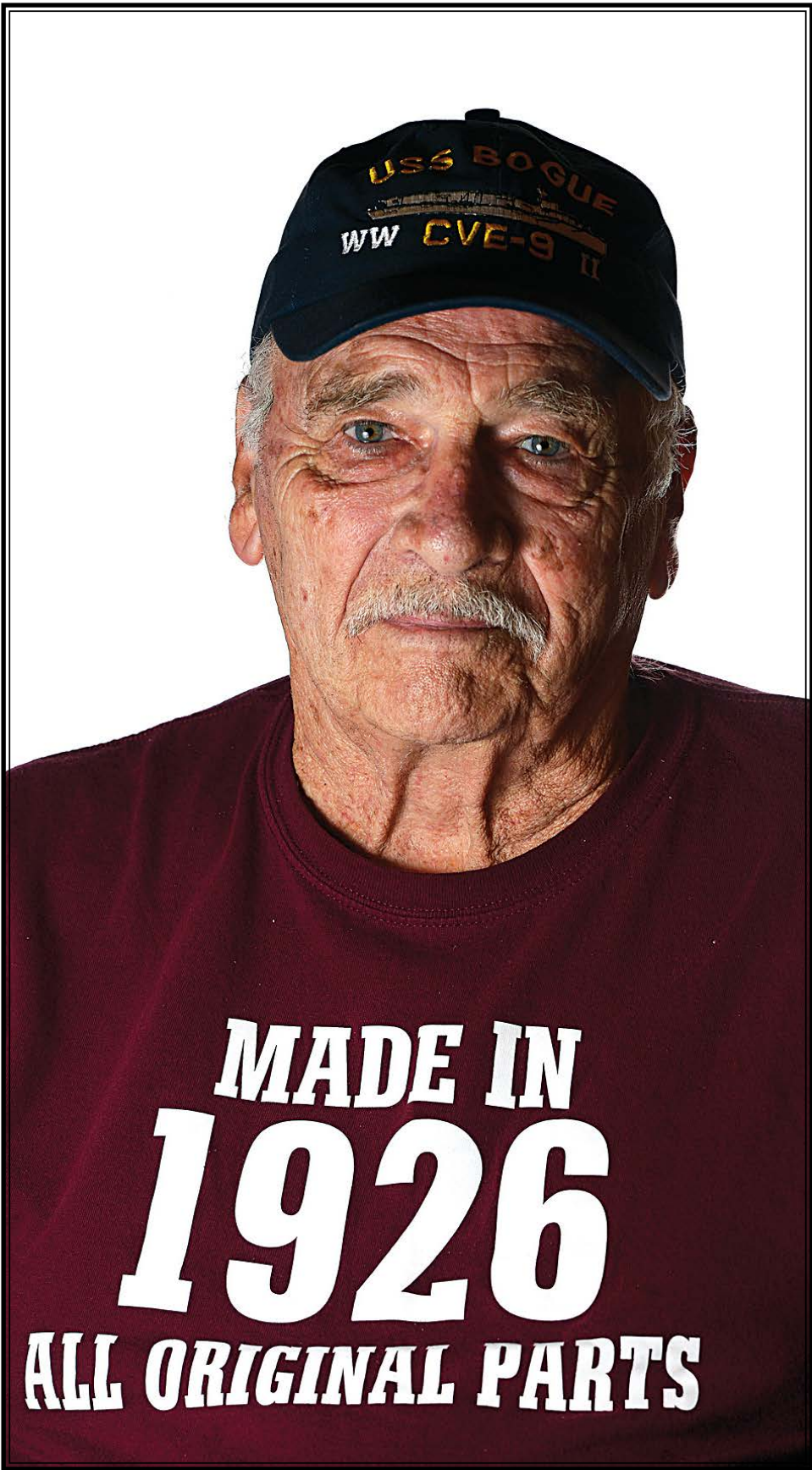


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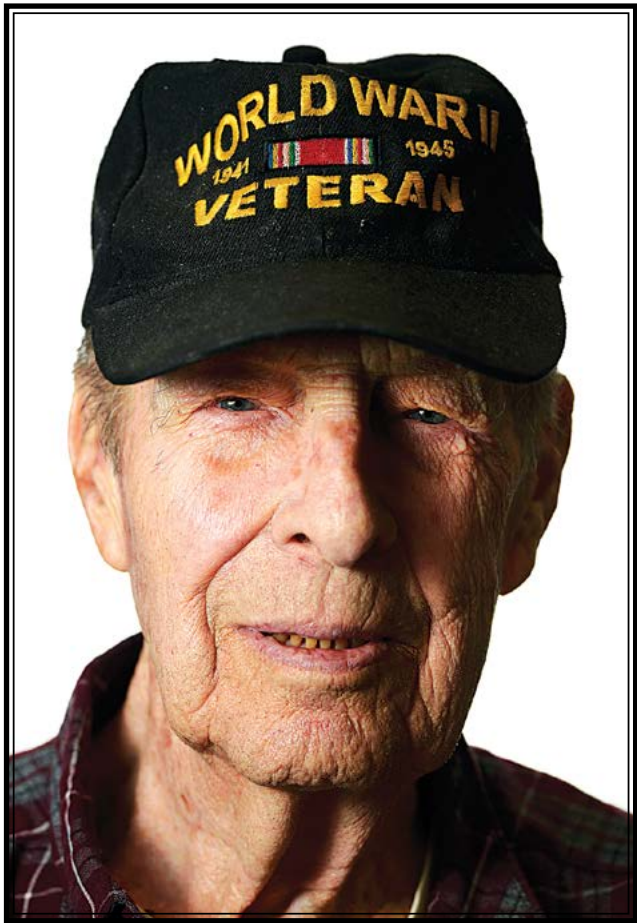
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Clockwise from top left: Madeline Chaffee; Clayton Bump; Lyndol Palin.

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HAROLD HIRTLE

DOB 8-16-1924
WEST STEWARTSTOWN, N.H.
UNITED STATES ARMY

Harold Hirtle, raised in the East Boston/Malden, Mass., area, enlisted in the Army on March 24, 1942. He served until November, 1945.

He was a 155 Long Tom gun man assigned to the field artillery in the Army, and his first deployment was to England, then he was deployed to France.

Reflecting back on his service in World War II, Hirtle, a resident at the Coos County Nursing Hospital in West Stewartstown, N.H., said, “Most of us that served are dead or dying – it is important to remember.”

And he has no trouble remembering.

In fact, a searing, heartbreaking image Hirtle witnessed as a teenager has stayed in his heart and mind and he can think of little else when he talks of the war.

He recalled arriving at Buchenwald, Germany, in the days after the concentration camp was liberated, where he witnessed, “...broken bodies – heads off, legs off, lots of bodies and pieces...They worked them to death and didn’t feed them...Oh my God...bodies piled up like cords of wood. Piles and piles.”

His eyes wet with tears, he went on, “Burning and trenches. They had to try and get rid of the evidence of what they had done, but they didn’t have time, and there were too many bodies.”

“We made all the villagers, everyone in town, go and see the bodies...To see what was happening in their town,” said Hirtle. “They

did nothing about it. Never tried to stop it. They held their heads.”

Hirtle went on, “I went to where Hitler and Eva Braun lived,” Berghof. “We went through their house. A palace in the woods.”

“We wanted to get ahold of Hitler and kill him,” Hirtle said. “That he would do these things to other human beings ... You just wanted to do everything you could to stop things like that from happening.”

During his time in World War II, Hirtle served in England, France, Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Asked what it means to him to be a member of what is considered The Greatest Generation, he said, “very proud.”

Still, war, he said, “It’s not all glory. You’re shooting, and you’re killing, and you’re murdering.”

“Talking about it helps me remember. I can’t put it into words,” Hirtle said.

His job was telephone/telegraph field operator.

“I laid the lines between the batteries in the field,” he said. “I was laying the lines and talking to somebody – directing the fire of the guns. And I was telling them where the artillery was landing and exploding in the enemy lines. The Germans...I could see the explosions. There had to be communications with the firing batteries.”

Hirtle recalled, “When we came into villages, the people cheered ... They had been under control by the Germans, beaten down by the Germans. We carried candy. The children and adults loved it. We would buy extra candy to have for the kids.”

JOHN JOHNSON

DOB 9-13-1918
PITTSBURG, NH
UNITED STATES ARMY

John Johnson was 24 years old when he went into World War II. He was born in North Danville, but had lived many places growing up.

He was deployed to England, then France, Belgium, Holland and Germany during his three years of service.

Johnson was working on the railroad when he was called into World War II to serve, he said, and those skills were used during his time in the war overseas, too. “We were what you called gandy dancers,” he said. He was a handyman working in different jobs, including on vehicles, he said, and he sometimes drove chaplains around in a Jeep when they were called.

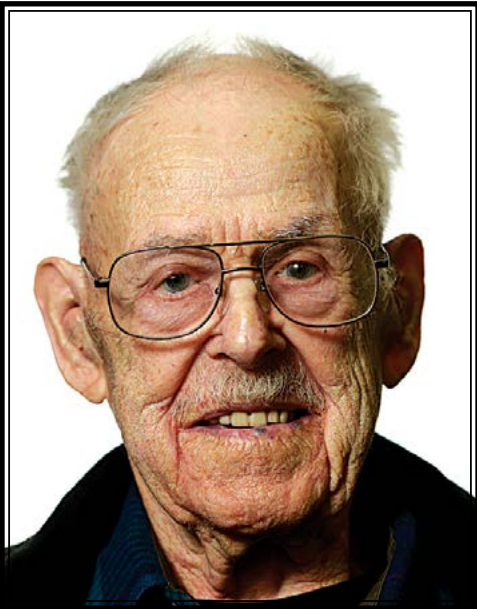
Johnson also worked as a cook’s helper and he ended up doing a lot of cooking at night because the sergeant who was supposed to cook for the men in his unit got drunk and couldn’t perform his cooking assignment, he said.

“The last six months, all I did was drive truck,” he said. He’d go into Paris to get the mail for his outfit.

Johnson witnessed firsthand men being shot up and dying. He said in the middle of the night a plane flew over, shooting at the boxcars his unit was in. He watched a man he knew blown apart in front of him, and still remembers seeing the blood rupturing from his body. Another time, an ammo train that was part of his unit’s responsibility was shot up and caught fire, exploding.

Serving was an honor, said Johnson. “I did whatever I was told to do, and I enjoyed it very much.”

He recently took the Honor Flight, a flight to Washington, D.C., where he was able to see the World War II Memorial for himself. It was an experience the 98-year-old said he will never forget.



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LARRY KING

**DOB 9-25-1923
ST. JOHNSBURY, VT
UNITED STATES NAVY**

Larry King graduated from Lyndon Institute in 1940 at the top of his class at age of 16, he said.

He was 18 when he was drafted into the United States Navy. He was sent to serve on a minesweeper in a convoy heading to France. He was a yeoman third class.

"I am very proud to be a part of the Greatest Generation that helped to destroy Adolph Hitler and his Nazis and Emperor Hirohito and his Japanese soldiers," he said.

His boat, which included 36 men and four officers, was part of a 5,000-ship convoy.

"German U-boats were going up and down the coast of the United States and they were chasing that convoy to England and we had all kinds of problems with them on the way over to England," said King.

They spent the winter a few hundred miles from London on the southern tip of England.

"We were all around there with the ships getting ready to join this huge convoy to France across the English Channel on D-Day," King remembered. "We participated in the invasion of France at Omaha and Utah beaches, sweeping mines to clear water of mines for U.S. Rangers, U.S. Marines and U.S. Army infantry to invade."

The convoy left on June 5, 1944, to cross the English Channel and took part in what would come to be known as D-Day and the months of battle that would follow.

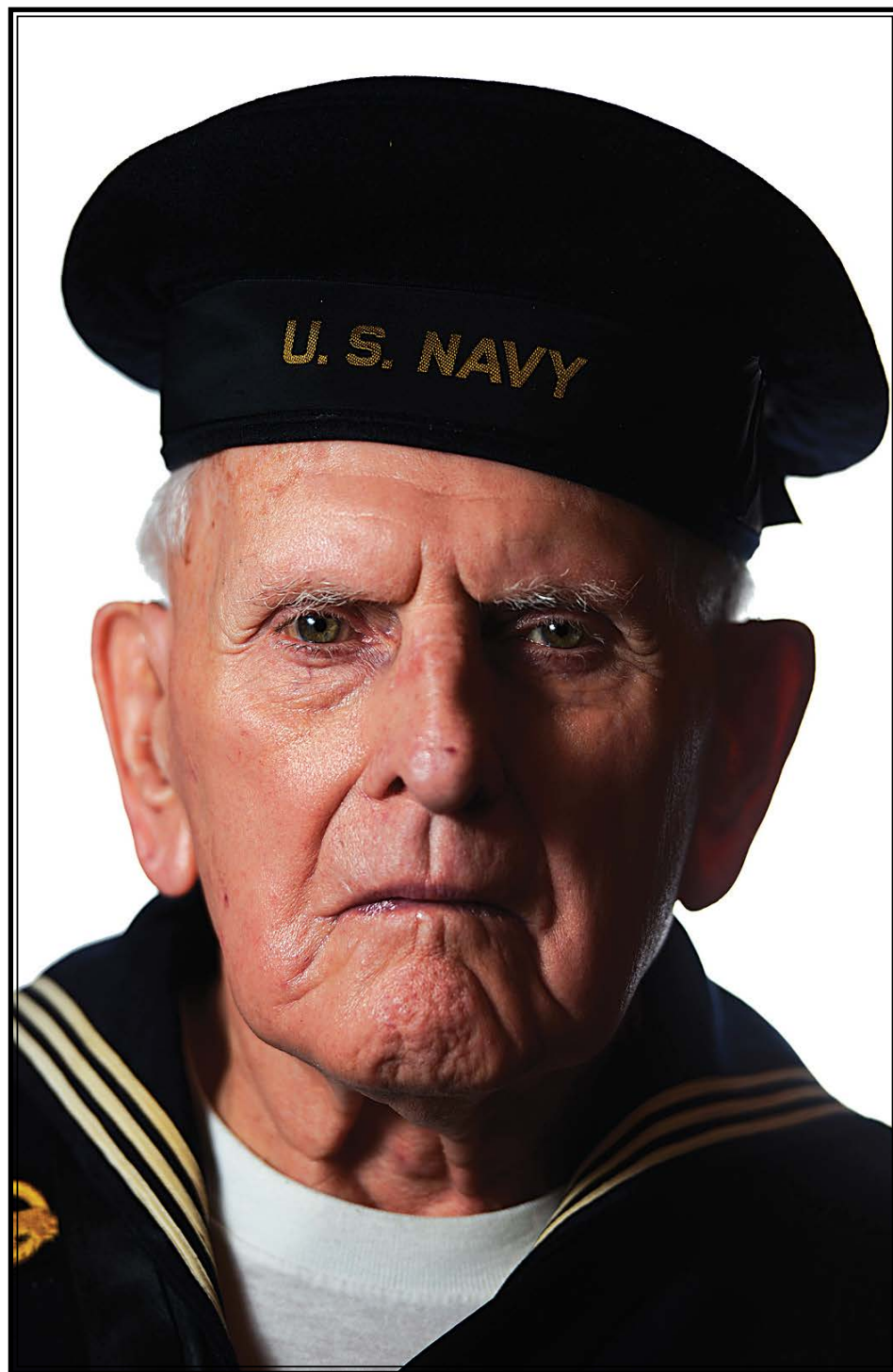
"We were ahead of everything else," said King of his minesweeper ship. "All the big ships were behind us, the destroyers."

King watched a minesweeper, just like the one he was on, blown up right in front of his eyes. It hit a moored mine that blew up right underneath the wooden ship, killing all 36 men and four officers aboard. The boat was instantly reduced to what looked like kindling wood, he said, and he saw one man's body propelled up above the carnage some 200 feet from the force of the explosion.

"[The boats] only sunk down the water eight feet so that you could go right over a mine field and not hit the mines that were rigged to blow you up... The big ships would hit them and get blown up and everything," King said. "Those minesweepers carried depth chargers on them and everything."

As the convoy came into Utah Beach, the Germans had "huge guns mounted in the cliffs... They were ready for us," said King.

"We swept those mines and blew them up so our guys could get ashore. They were shooting down at



the beach and our destroyers and battleships were shooting back at them during the invasion, and we finally got them landed," King recalled. "There were a lot of people from around this area, some of the guys I went to high school with [at Lyndon Institute] were there. They were all in the Army, landing for us."

On Christmas Eve, a tragedy beyond his imagination happened right in front of him.

"We got a call the night before Christmas, to go out and salvage a troop ship from North Carolina. The whole regiment, 4,400 soldiers were headed for that beach to land. They were within a mile of the land when they were torpedoed," said King.

The ship was hit a second time, and all 4,400 began jumping into the freezing water, with only belt-style life preservers, remembered King.

"They abandoned ship and took life boats, 4,400 men on there with no way of escape, jumping into the sea," said King.

King, who was 19 at the time, witnessed the drowning of most of those troops that Christmas Eve. He used a boat hook to pull one man's body, a full colonel, from the water, King still remembers.

"Some of them had jumped into the sea and some of them went down into the sea with it," said King. "It split in two when the second torpedo hit... We were just pulling those men aboard... We saved some nurses, just 40, that's all. We had to drive off and leave the others."

"The Lord was riding with me," King said. "One piece of shrapnel hit my helmet, and if I hadn't had my helmet on, it would have taken my head off."

"I was proud to serve our country," King said. "Freedom is not free. Many lives were lost so we can live our lives free today."

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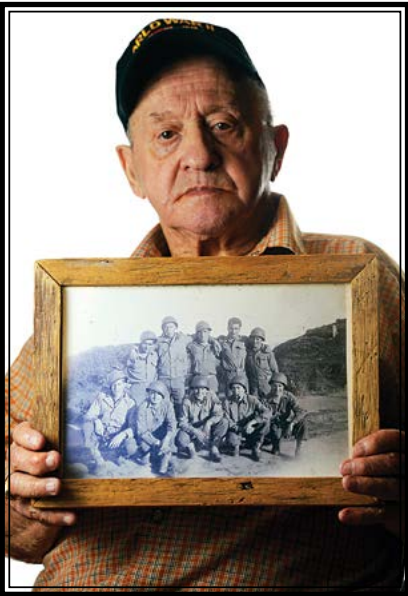


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ALBERT LACASSE

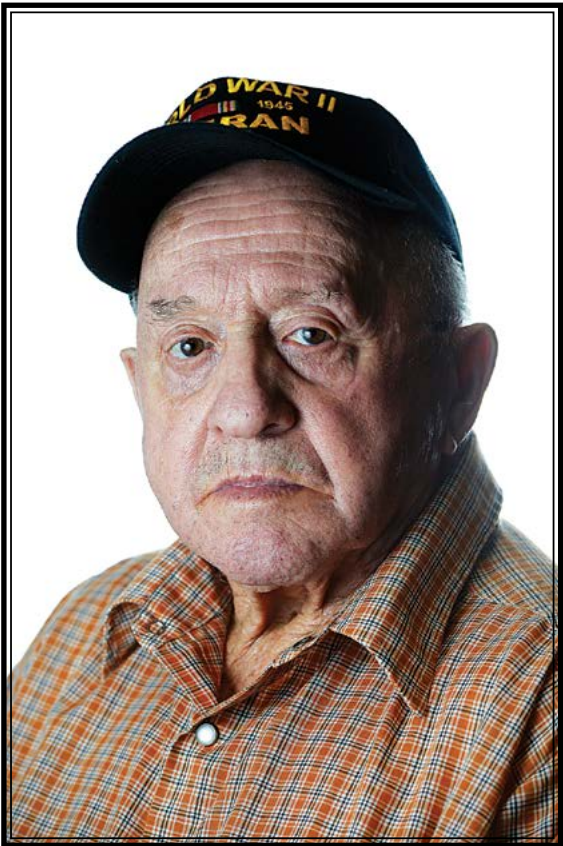
DOB 9-1-1924
GREENSBORO BEND, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY ANTI-AIRCRAFT



Albert LaCasse was born on a farm in Wiliston, one of 12 children. He had left high school to work on the farm, and went into the service on Feb. 16, 1943. In the summer of 1943, he landed in North Africa, at the end of the fighting there. “We were fighting with German planes,” said LaCasse, showing photos of the huge guns he helped to man on the ground, aimed at German planes above. He was in North Africa for a year, and worked along the coast of the continent, he said, to try to keep Germans from attacking troops on the ground, using radar-activated 90 mm guns. LaCasse said he wants to make sure younger generations understand the sacrifice that was involved. “It wasn’t just a TV show,” he said of the major casualties the U.S. and its allies suffered across the two theaters of the war, working to defeat Germany and Japan during World War II. All the time he served, LaCasse had his trusty camera with him, and he brought home many images from

his days in the service. There was a German plane that flew over every night to take photos. He clearly recalls when “we finally got her,” and put an end to the night missions of the enemy plane. LaCasse and his anti-aircraft ground unit C Battery 112th Artillery, attached to the 7th Army Division, were also in France and Germany, helping with anti-aircraft needs, and on the ground, once the war had ended. Once the war ended, LaCasse’s unit took German prisoners from the front lines to France, work that went on during the months after the war. “They couldn’t just let the prisoners go,” he explained. LaCasse was fortunate that he didn’t get struck, and few men from his unit were lost or injured. The ones that were got into land mines, he said. War, he said, “It’s awful.”

LaCasse had to go to the hospital for his tonsils while he was overseas, very near The Battle of The Bulge. The hospital was filled with suffering war-injured men. “I’ll never forget the noises coming from those wards,” he said, shaking his head, remembering the anguish of the bandaged-up soldiers he saw, many covered in bandages except for a tiny breathing hole left open. “I’ll never forget that... we were lucky, though, we didn’t lose too many men.”

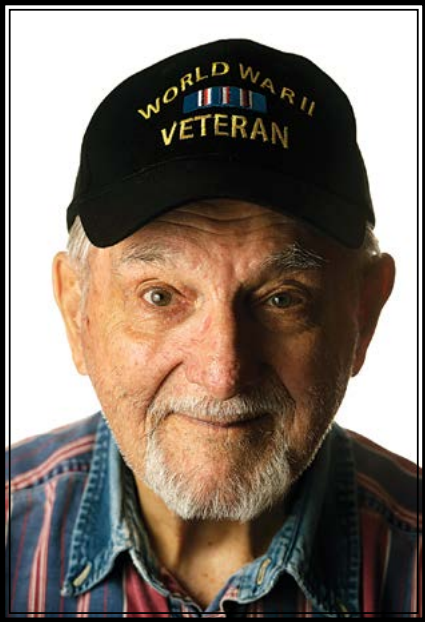


JACOB J. KOKALY JR.

DOB 3-27-1928
NEWPORT, VT
U.S. MARINE CORPS

Jacob Kokaly wanted to help bring an end to World War II by serving overseas. But, even though he entered the U.S. Marine Corps, he spent his service in the U.S. It was a frustration for him. “I didn’t go any place,” he said. “I was stuck in California.” Kokaly regrets not having gone overseas, and said he and the men he was in the Marine Corps with were all willing to go. They remained on active duty state-side, and worked to clean military equipment in warehouses near the barracks where they were housed. “That’s really what I did in the service – cleaned equipment,” Kokaly said. He had qualified as a telephone linesman and had signed on for two years. Kokaly had wanted to sign up earlier for the service, but was too young to do so without parental permission while World War II was still underway; his mother would not sign for him. Kokaly yearned to both serve his country and to see the world, he said.

He said his high school graduation class in Minnesota, where he was raised, was missing a dozen young men who had enlisted “and two of them had already been killed in action in the Pacific.” “We had all dozen names read at our graduation ceremonies, and the school, Eveleth High School, awarded diplomas to the parents of the missing classmates,” he recalled. “Our class had two pine trees planted on the front lawn of our high school, and I, the youngest member of our class, had the honor of laying the memory plaque at the foot of the trees, after our graduation ceremonies. They’ve grown to over 45 feet tall – our class was the Class of 1945,” he said. “It’s not a war memory, but it is a fond memory for me because one of the fallen boys was not only my classmate, but also my close neighbor, with whom I used to walk to school during our high school years, and used to hunt with.” With peace time having come, the military was paring back on personnel, and Kokaly was released from duty early, he said. “I never did get to see the world.” “I was, and still am, proud to have served America, even though mine was state-side service,” said Kokaly. “We Minnesotans applied for overseas duty at least once a month, but never got ‘picked.’”



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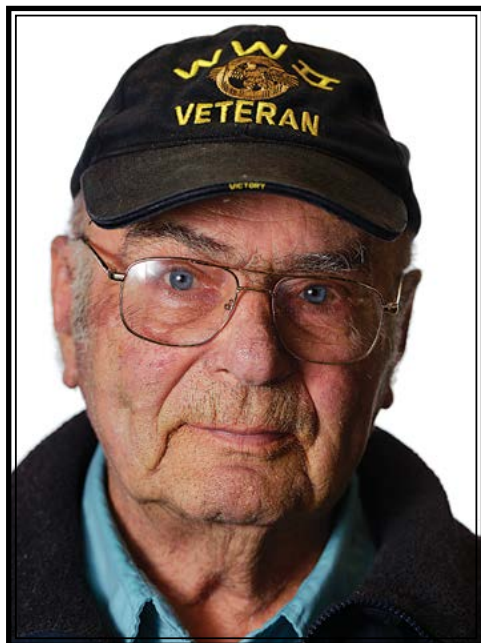
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CHARLES "JARVIS" LEWIS JR.

Known as "Jarvis," Charles Lewis Jr., 92, enlisted in the Army on Dec. 1, 1942.

"It was the right thing to do," he said of serving during World War II; being a member of The Greatest Generation to him, means "happy years."

Something he'll never forget? "Seeing the devastation of towns in Europe." Lewis was a member of the 555th Signal Depot Company.

Jarvis comes from a family in which all five brothers were in the service during the war-time in different branches, including the marine Corps, and they had a healthy competition throughout their lives representing the branches of the military.

The timing for Jarvis with his Army service saw him land with his battalion twice just as the

severe fighting was over, and he muses that they knew better than to take him on – he missed the heavy fighting first in Germany when he arrived, and then in the Philippines. But he saw the war's devastation and heartache in both places and was part of the war effort to help. He recalls seeing an entire German town "wiped out...just completely gone, I remember that."

He remembers seeing a place where bodies were laid out for loved ones to identify them and publicly mourn, a horror he can't erase from his mind that he has carried all his life.

"That's not the good part of it," he says, shaking his head, closing his eyes.

"We were very lucky that we won the war. If we hadn't, we would be the ones that would be war criminals. You don't blow up a whole town and get away with it," he said.

**DOB 11-21-1923
COLEBROOK, NH
UNITED STATES ARMY**

When he was in the Netherlands, he and his fellow service members held a fake funeral for Adolph Hitler, not long before the evil dictator was actually dead. They even had a coffin draped with the German flag, he said and it was put in the dump.

Jarvis says he was one of the lucky ones, never having been shot at and never using his weapon during the war. He also went back in a later war, and served the nation during two tours in Vietnam, again escaping injury and returning home in one piece. "I was always at the right place at the right time," he said. He served about 30 years total in the armed forces.

Joining the war effort back in World War II was not even a question, says Jarvis. "Everybody was going. It was the right thing to do."

MAURICE LACLAIR

**DOB 8-10-1922
BARTON, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY**

Maurice Laclair was drafted into the Army. "I was a coward, I didn't want to go," says the 94-year-old.

"I trained some in the Memorial building, with the principal," he said of the marching the young men in town would take part in during the war time.

His father died when he was 14, so he left Barton Academy in his freshman year to help with the family logging and wood business.

After a few years, Laclair married a local woman. Soon after he was drafted and they didn't get to have a honeymoon. Laclair was 20 when the draft called.

At Ft. Riley in Kansas he was trained to be part of the horse cavalry. Part of the training required they ride bareback, which was mighty uncomfortable, he still recalls.

He was shipped overseas on the USS Gen. John Pope ship.

There were nearly 6,000 troops on board, and the ship had to change course frequently for fear of Japanese submarines detecting them.

The seasickness of many made the voyage mis-



erable, he recalled.

Once the ship reached its destination in Bombay, the troops were put onto rail cars, headed for Ledo in eastern India.

The men ended up being airlifted into Burma. The China-Burma-India Theater saw battles that were critical to preventing the Japanese from advancing into Southeast Asia, according to Laclair's son-in-law, Raymond Perkins Jr., in the self-published book, *Maurice E. Laclair: A Vermonter's Memories of the CBI Theater in World War II*. He calls it "The Forgotten War."

The troops crossed the Himalayas with pack mules helping to carry supplies.

Within just a few days of arriving, Laclair's unit would see heavy fighting.

He was in combat for a total of 17 days, and

saw many men around him lose their lives, he recalls.

The men dug deep foxholes to try to stay out of harm's way, but many did not make it.

One night the U.S. troops moved in and planned to attack the Japanese forces across the ravine, digging into the bamboo jungle, encircling the Japanese.

Laclair had lost his helmet in battle and took one from a slain fellow American.

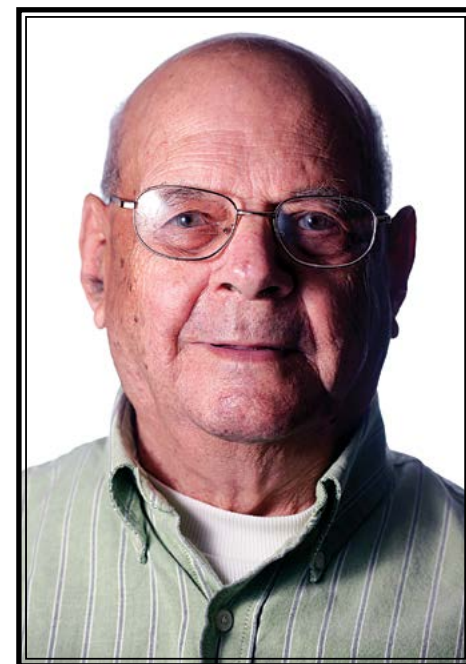
During the fighting, Laclair was struck by shrapnel, right near his heart.

A tiny bible in a metal case given to him by his mother was in his pocket, beneath his uniform, and it deflected the shrapnel, keeping him alive and uninjured, a bit of a miracle. He has the small Bible still and cherishes it, knowing it, and his mother's love, somehow were with him deep in the jungle that day.

He remembers carrying an injured lieutenant out of battle on a stretcher, his leg was partly blown off. He and his fellow soldiers stopped every so often to tighten the tourniquet, in hopes of saving the officer's life.

"There were guys who got killed right on the side of me," said Laclair.

An Army man from New York took out a Japanese soldier who was about to shoot Laclair. "He



saved my life," Laclair said.

He was sent to China after that, where he drove truck for a time. After the atomic bombs were dropped and the peace talks followed, he ultimately found his way home.

He said at one point he almost was forced back into battle, but he had done his time. He said, "You ain't going to get me back out there unless you shoot me."

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ARTHUR LORD

DOB 8-10-1926

LYNDON, VT

UNITED STATES ARMY

Arthur Lord of Lyndon enlisted on his 18th birthday in 1944. He had hoped to join the Air Force but is color blind, so went into the Army instead. He received what he called minimal training in the infantry and was “rushed to the Battle of the Bulge in Europe.” He entered combat around Nov. 1 that year and served as a sniper until July 1, 1946 in occupation and later transferred to quarter master.

Asked what it meant to him to serve in World War II, Lord said, “It meant a desire to get the enemy eliminated.”

“It meant kill or be killed and achieving the respect of a commanding officer,” said Lord. “In war is where you do or do not achieve your greatest love for your country.”

This excerpt comes from a story Lord wrote about his war-time experiences as a sniper, “Battle of The Bulge and Church.”

Lord’s company was held up and a German artillery unit was moving closer to their line of defense, around the same time (not known to infantrymen) that “the Germans were accepting American prisoners only to line them up and shoot them.”

When an officer and captain discussed sending some men to investigate, no one volunteered. The officer resisted, he was worried about the men not surviving the mission.

“The Captain asked again for a volunteer, but quickly turned to me as if he knew who to ask! He asked, ‘will you volunteer?’ I said ‘no.’ He said, ‘will you go if I give you an order?’ ”

Lord knew if he didn’t do it, an artillery drop could kill him anyway.

“I said ‘yes, I’ll go.’ It really made no difference if I did as a volunteer or in an artillery drop. I had noticed on the map that there was a church about a half-mile ahead, just a little beyond the edge of the woods. There was considerable method in my madness, and the church was involved in much of it.”

He asked for two additional walkie talkies in addition to the one he was assigned, and headed into the woods.

He used one to send with, one for himself, and one to make a coded call to his artillery in the woods about three miles back, giving them the location of the church, asking “for the best gun on ready.” Lord crawled through the woods to avoid booby traps and he made noise, saying, “The enemy always knew where you were, so let them know you were coming.”

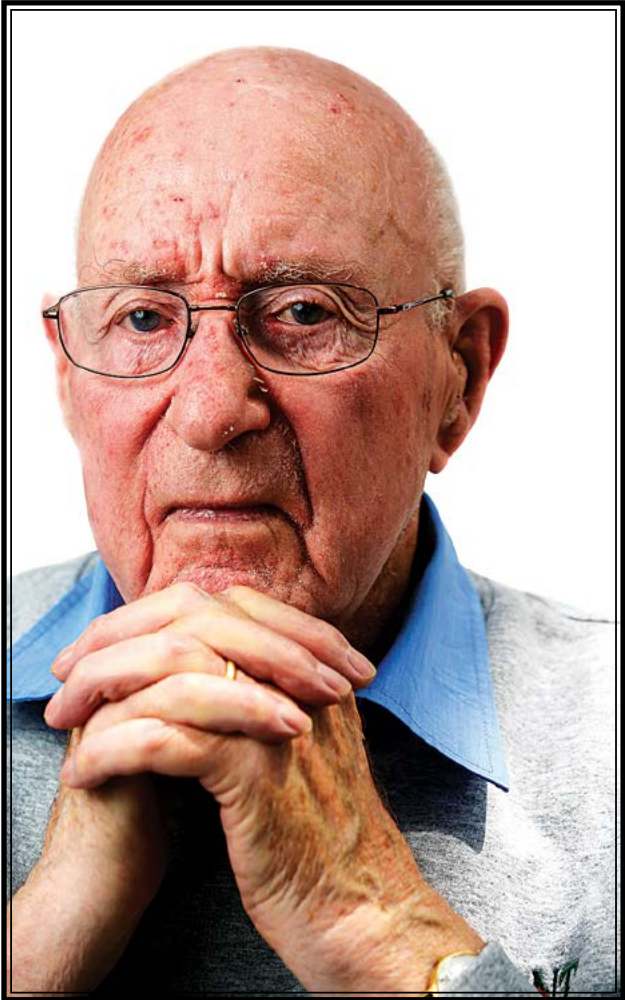
The enemy could hear his open walkie talkie and the noise. He left that one down and walked toward the church quietly. It was silent and there were no booby traps. He went up the ladder to the belfry.

It had begun raining when Lord heard “the clang of a tank cover go down and lock.” The tank would not start, as the Germans were short on gasoline, said Lord. He could see a blue flame in the exhaust during the rain, so could locate the tank wherever it went because they were using alcohol as their fuel. He called in the church coordinates and the gun that backed him up hit the tank, then an 8 mm artillery piece it was towing.

By the next week, the Germans had retreated a good deal and Lord was involved in a surrender of a German tank which came upon four times as many U.S. troops. They dropped surrender flags and lowered their gun. Lord had been asked by his captain to sign the surrender paper.

“The tank commander looked at the paper and said in perfect English, ‘I am pleased to be done with this war – and to, ah, are you an English Lord?!’ ” He had mistaken Lord’s last name for a royal title.

“It was some time before they were escorted to the rear to be transported elsewhere. In the meantime, we had much to talk about. We were both hungry and I had a K ration. He was in-



terested to ask about it so I gave him part of mine. He had a rye bread with some kind of beans (ration). It was good. I had never had rye bread.”

CLEVELAND H. MINOR

DOB 2-3-1926

LYNDON CORNER, VT

UNITED STATES ARMY

Minor didn’t want to go into World War II. He was drafted. When he was called into the war, he had been just about to go to trade school. “I got out of school in June, and they called me.”

He was 18 years old, 124 pounds, he said.

They asked him which branch of the service he wanted to serve in, and he responded the Navy, but was quickly told, “We need men in the infantry.”

Training was supposed to be 16 weeks, but it was cut short because they needed men so badly at the time of the Battle of the Bulge. “They had lost so many,” he recalled.

He was sent over on a French ship and ended up serving under General Patten in Belgium, France and Germany.

“I turned 19 going across on the boat,” recalled Minor.

They were allowed to sleep one night in a barn, on beds of wheat before being sent out in a convoy in France along the border, where they dug into foxholes, two men to each hole.

They could see and hear the Germans from their foxholes, Minor said, “But they didn’t realize we were there.” He was with the 63rd Battalion connected to the 11th Armored Division, Patten’s unit, Minor said.

At one point, Minor lost his helmet when he hit the ground in an



artillery fight. He was told to grab a helmet of a dead lieutenant. He responded, “I’m not a lieutenant,” but was told to put the helmet on.

Minor remembers being asked if he had Bazooka training, which he did, and being asked to help train two older men. They set up under a bridge, and took down a German tank as it attempted to cross.

Minor remembers having to cross the Rhine with Germans approaching. The unit got a message from Gen. Patten asking them how long it would take for them to make it to Berlin, Germany.

A lot of prisoners were taken by the allied forces, said Minor. He was in Germany when the war ended. They had a lot of prisoners they were transporting, and Minor remembers seeing countless Russian prisoners cut their own throats and commit suicide rather than stay prisoners and return with the allied forces. They jumped off the train, and he witnessed so many Russian soldiers take their own lives that, “There were very few Russians left.”

Of his time in the war, and the great deal of action he saw in the infantry, Minor said, “It was quite an experience I will never forget.”

“I came home in one piece,” said Minor. “Everybody said I was lucky. They always said to me in training, when you hit the ground, don’t get up. I didn’t take any chances.”



ALDEN MINOT

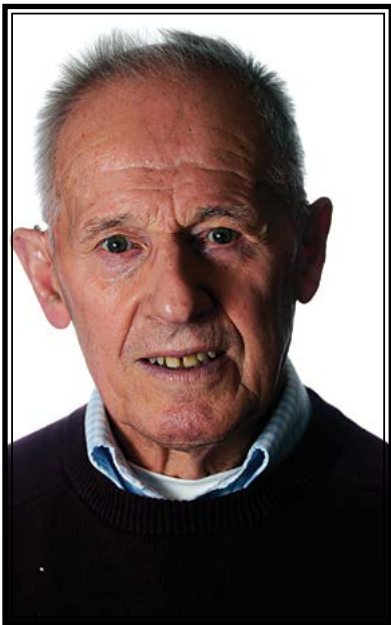
DOB 11-20-1928
BATH, NH
UNITED STATES ARMY

Alden Minot enlisted Oct. 2, 1946 and was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, for six months. Then he went to Ansdach, Germany, where he trained for three months as a teletype repairman. He then was sent to Frankfurt, Germany, to the Eucom Headquarters for nine months.

"I was proud to be a member of the Army and to be helpful in the occupation force," said Minot. He said he remembers riding a train through Germany which had been severely bombed and nearly flattened, and wondering how anyone could have survived.

Being a member of the Greatest Generation, Minot said, means a lot to him, and he has had the honor to be acquainted with many friends and relatives who served during World War II, and who "put their lives in danger for all of us."

"I was glad to do my part," he said.



KARL NIEBACKER

DOB 3-13-1920
WHEELOCK, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY

Karl Niebacker was born in Braunschweig, Germany, and left there at the age of 6 to come to New Haven, Connecticut.

Niebacker, who now lives in Wheelock, was deferred twice due to holding defense jobs. He was finally drafted in June 1943. He was sent to Camp McQuaide, California, then to the Hawaiian Islands, to Oahu, on Dec. 31, 1943.

Serving in World War II, Niebacker said, "made me feel good, and proud to defend our country." He served for almost three years.

Niebacker was the head cook while in Hawaii. "I worked in the officer's mess," he said. "Their food, I regret to say, was better than the enlisted men's food. I didn't think that was fair."

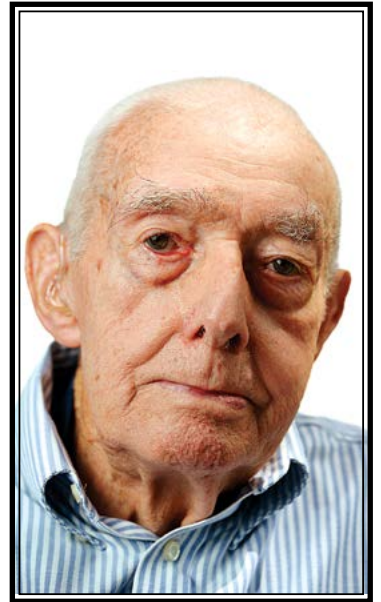
Niebacker was stationed on the Mariana Islands (Tinian) after Hawaii, from Oct. 17, 1944 to Dec. 10, 1945. "I was there when the Enola Gay took off to

bomb Hiroshima," he said. "When it took off, we did not know what its mission was."

He still remembers how the plane tried to lift off, then descended again, and went back up, "It was so heavy. We were not aware, no one told me anything," he said of the devastation that plane was to bring.

Later, Niebacker was sent to Tinian after it had been attacked. "The U.S. was going island-by-island close to Japan. The Japanese bombers would still come, and we would go into the caves on Tinian when this happened. The island was flat in some parts as far as the eye could see, and we were able to have the B-29 bombers take off from there."

The costs of war were heavy and heartbreaking, said Niebacker, but he said, "We saved the world from a lot of serious problems," by helping put an end to some of the horror that led to the



Americans engaging in World War II.

Asked what it means to be considered a member of The Greatest Generation, Niebacker had just one word: "wonderful."



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LYNDOL PALIN

DOB 7-18-21
DERBY, VT

UNITED STATES ARMY, AVIATION CADET CORPS

A Derby native, Lyndol Palin was living in Hartford, Connecticut when he enlisted. “I knew that I wanted to get into the Army Air Corps if I could,” said Palin. “I wanted to fly. I got my training all over the southeast,” from Tennessee to Alabama, to Georgia and Florida, attending increasingly advanced flight training, eventually attending B-17 flight school.

Palin’s crew shipped out of MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, to England, where he was part of the 385th Bombardment Group, assigned to the 8th Air Force.

“I flew 35 missions. The last three I flew as acting command pilot, leading our squadron,” Palin said. “I got to England very shortly after V-E Day in ‘45, and I finished all my missions by April of ‘46.”

“One was a mission to Berlin,” Palin said, recalling his group, which would see three squadrons of 12 planes each go up, for a total of 36 planes, on a mission.

On that mission, “We lost a whole squadron, this was one of the roughest ones that I remember,” he said. “The guy who was flying off my left wing got shot up and his crew had to bail, and they all became prisoners of war.”

“The plane flying just below and right close behind to me got shot up badly, and they had to ditch in the English Channel,” Palin said. The pilot and co-pilot perished, and the rest of the crew got out.

On that mission, the plane Palin was flying ended up with 160 bullet holes pierced through it, he said.

“Fortunately, none of my crew got hit, and nothing vital got hit on the plane,” said Palin. “We made it back from that one, but it was a bad one. I never even had a man wounded on my plane, which was pretty exceptional.”

Another mission Palin said was memorable was on a mission into Germany, “I don’t remember the name of the target, it was some town very deep in Germany.”

Two of the engines on Palin’s bomber were hit, and disabled, leaving the B-17 with just two operating engines. The plane could not maintain high altitudes with half its engines gone. He lowered their altitude and the crew tossed out as

much weight from the cargo as they could to lighten their load.

“We were fortunate to get to a part of Belgium that had been taken over by the Allied Forces, and we found an American fighter air strip and we made an emergency landing successfully on two engines, and amazingly enough, when we examined the aircraft after that trip, we could only find two holes, but both of them were in critical parts of the engine,” said Palin.

Of his service during World War II, Palin said, “It was a matter of both duty and pride.”

Asked what it means to him to be a member of The Greatest Generation, Palin said, “I feel very proud of that generation, very lucky to be here.”

“We crushed the Nazis,” he said, “and then the Japanese. The only thing that I think we did wrong was I think we made too many concessions to Russia when it was all over, and they became a great power and a really dark force in the world. Overall, we stamped out a lot of bad stuff.”

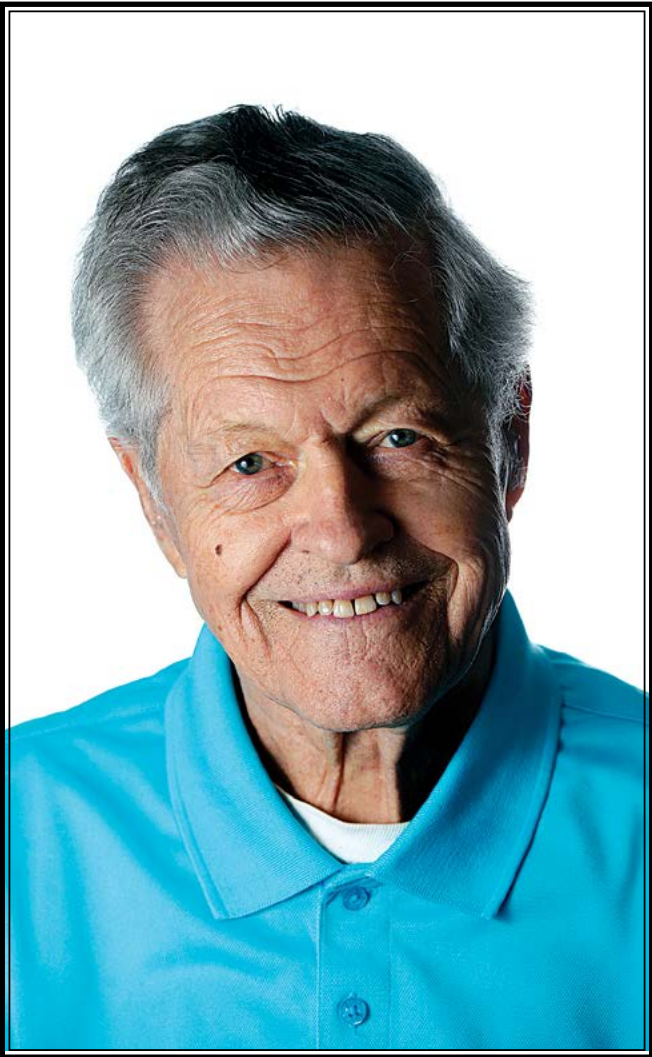
Asked what he would want younger generations to remember about World War II, Palin said, “I guess I would want them to remember that we saved freedom.”

“If we hadn’t been successful, it would be an entirely different world that we live in, and the fact that we stamped out those bad ideologies at the time - we did our job,” he said.

Palin said he was still in the service “for a little while after the atomic bomb dropped, and had enough points to be released from active duty, so got released from active duty and returned to civilian life.”

He was engaged when he entered the war, and his fiancé, Evelyn, had wanted to get married before he was sent over, but Palin said there were already too many war widows, so he would not get married until he was back home.

“Of course the first thing I did when I got home was get married, and we’ve been very fortunate, we’ve been married now for 71 years,” Palin said.



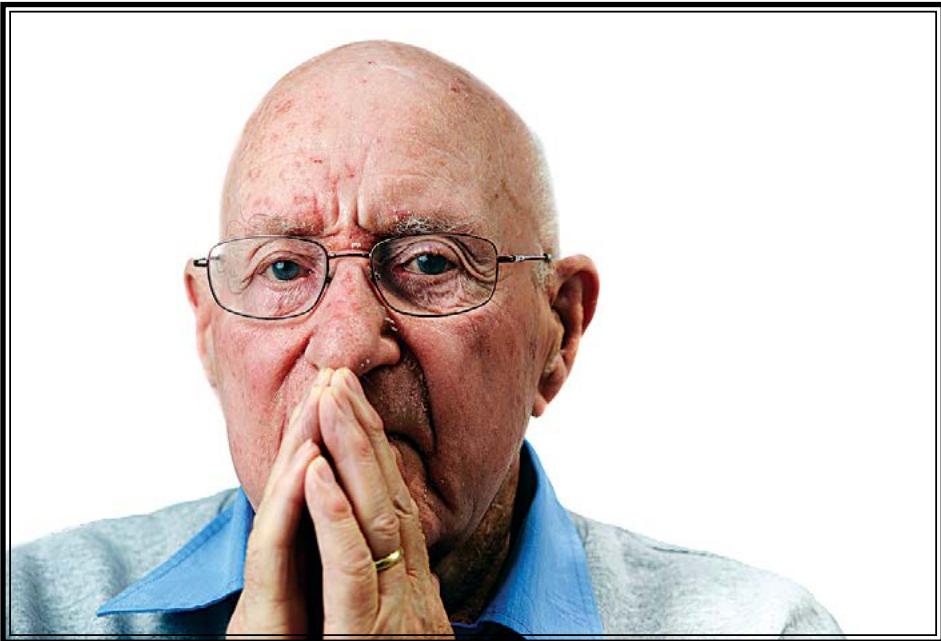
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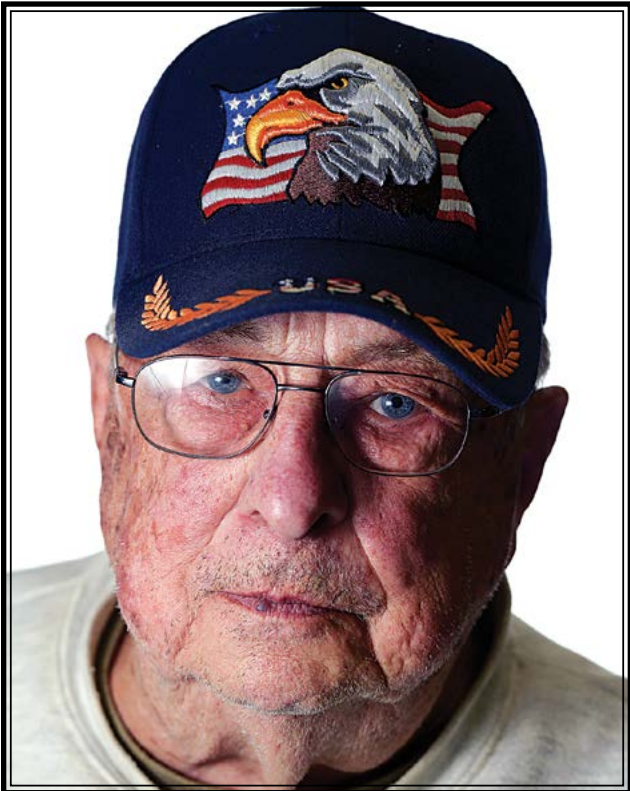


Upper left: Larry King
Upper right: Arthur Lord
Lower left: Francis Allard
Lower right: Donald Wheatley

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MILTON PARADIS

DOB 4-26-1925
NORTH STRATFORD, NH
UNITED STATES NAVY



Milton Paradis graduated in 1943 and was called into service through the draft board in Manchester, New Hampshire that summer, he said. He left as part of the 133rd Seabee Naval Construction Battalion. Paradis' battalion was involved in the invasion on Iwo Jima, attached to the 4th Marine Division. "I was there the day they invaded," he said, "It came too soon."

He was 18 years old.

The Japanese on Iwo Jima "were dug in better than any wood-chuck could dig a hole," he recalled.

"For me to join the service was great. I had two brothers in the Army, so our family was in it together," he said. "It was our duty."

Seeing the destruction in Nagasaki, Japan after the bombing there is a memory he has carried with him all his life, said Paradis. "I will never forget it."

Of being a member of The Greatest Generation, Paradis said, "Tom Brokaw did a remarkable job and the sad part is you mention it today and very few know the book exists," he said of the work the newsman did to capture the stories of those who served in World War II.

"I never saw any live Japanese, but I was shot at a few times. A sniper took a shot at me," said Paradis. He said the flame throwers allowed many servicemen to survive in battles in the Pacific where he was, and where he and his unit huddled during the exchange of fire he witnessed.

After, Paradis said, the bodies were everywhere.

"It was grotesque, I saw quite a few killed; you wouldn't want to go through that kind of thing again if you didn't have to," said Paradis. To try to survive, he said, "We did what we were told."

Paradis has gotten together with other Iwo Jima veterans in the North Country of New Hampshire through the years. Their numbers are dwindling today, he said.

Of his service during the war, Paradis said, "I'd just have to say you can believe in your country and do your duty to fulfill your obligation."



GLENN PERRY

DOB 10-10-1922
COLEBROOK, NH
UNITED STATES ARMY

Glenn Perry was raised on a family farm in Clarksville until age 5, when both his parents died from influenza. He then went to live with his Uncle Neil in West Stewartstown.

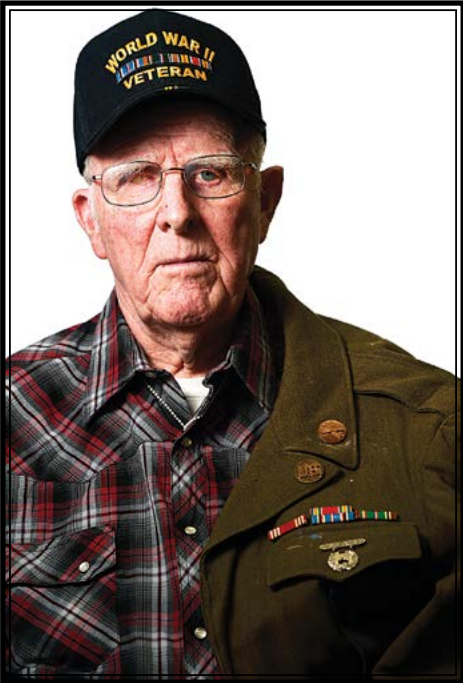
He was drafted at the age of 21, even though a childhood accident had left him with just one eye. He was on limited duty, and not allowed to go to the front lines, he said.

He went for training to Ft. Devens in Massachusetts, then to Ft. McCullough in Alabama for basic training, he said. He spent one year in Camden, New Jersey, where he met his future wife, Miriam, and before he left for active duty overseas, they became engaged. Perry spent two years serving in France.

"I could see the front lines from where I was," he said. "They took four men off each truck and made MPs out of us. I drove pretty near all the time I was in France, with my one eye! I did everything they told me to."

When asked what it meant to be part of the Greatest Generation, Glenn became tearful, and said, "Proud, I done my share."

Asked how he hopes younger generations will remember the men and women who served our nation during World War II, he said, "I'd like them to appreciate what we did for our country."



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JOE QUEENIN

DOB 6-1-1923
DERBY LINE, VT
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

The day after Joe Queenin graduated from high school in Newport, Vermont, he and three of his buddies decided to enlist in Boston.

"I liked the Corps," recalled Queenin, who served in the sixth division. He went off to Parris Island for his training, then Camp Lejeune, and was deployed to the Pacific for his service overseas.

Of the Marine Corps training, Queenin said, "You listen and you don't say anything; you just keep going."

One of the first places Queenin landed was American Samoa, which he said was beautiful beyond words. "It was paradise."

They didn't get to stay in paradise long, however.

They went on to New Zealand, then to an island called Bouganville, part of New Guinea, where they engaged in combat. It wasn't the worst he would see,

though, said Queenin.

The heavy fighting he was involved in was on the island of Okinawa, said Queenin. "Okie was the toughest one for me," he said of the combat he saw in the Pacific Theater.

One young soldier was warned to stay in his foxhole and did not. He got out to go to the bathroom and was killed, recalled Queenin. "You saw a lot of things like that, and you just hoped it didn't happen to you."

He recalls a group of Navy Seabees coming to his aid when they were nearly out of rations and starving while in combat on Okinawa; the Seabees shared their rations with the Marines, and Queenin said to this day he feels a debt of gratitude to the Seabees for saving them from hunger. "I'll never forget them," he said.

"I saw a lot of action there," said Queenin, who said he saw many people die in front of him. "Somehow, the bullets missed me, I was lucky."

After the war ended and Queenin came home, he was welcomed by a local family to stay with them; a young woman he knew from high school, Bev, and her family, offered him a room, and he got a job and re-entered civilian life. He and Bev would be married a few months after his return, right in her mom's living room, and they were married for 65 years before she died a few years ago.

Queenin said one moment he has never forgotten from the war was hearing his boyhood nickname, "Scaldi," yelled out on Okinawa. "I knew it had to be someone from back home in Woburn," he said. The nickname came from Queenin getting a sunburned scalp when doing work chores as a boy.

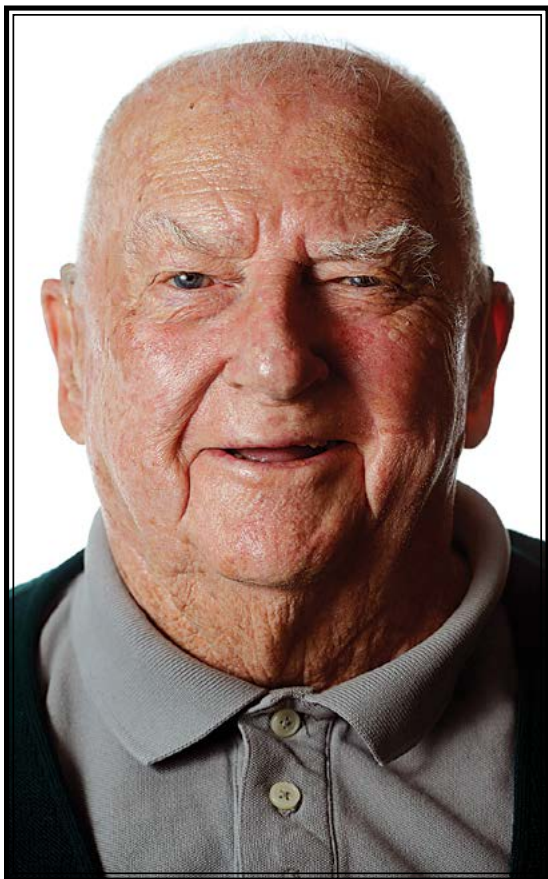
It was indeed someone from back home, Eddie Ruitz, also in the Corps. The two young men were happy to see one another, but had little time to chat.

Sadly, not long after Queenin saw Eddie, he was killed in action.

"Okie was tough," says Queenin, shaking his head.

Of World War II, had the men and women in the service and in the Allied Forces not done their jobs, instead of the stars and stripes flying on our flag, there would be rising sun for Japan, or a swastika, with the Nazis in power, says Queenin.

"We did our duty," said Queenin. "I have a lot of pride to be a member of The Greatest Generation," he said. "I think the war made a man out of me...It did me a lot of good."



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PETE RACINE

DOB 12-4-1924
ST. JOHNSBURY, VT
U.S. MARINE CORPS

A St. Johnsbury native, Edward “Pete” Racine recalls a Marine Corps trailer coming to town to recruit young men for World War II in early 1942.

“Me and my two buddies climbed on board, and before we knew it, we were in the Marine Corps,” said Racine. He entered the service on Sept. 2, 1942.

He was sent to Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California, then to San Diego, where he boarded his first ship to deploy for World War II.

Racine served in the 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion.

The first stop for Racine’s unit was the Marshall Islands, and he was part of an invasion to secure two small islands there. It was swift, he said, taking about three days.

Troops then headed to Guadalcanal, where they were reloaded with new equipment including landing tank vehicles with 10-cylinder airplane engines mounted on their backs that would come up out of the bottoms of ships bringing them to the island invasions, recalled Racine.

Amphibious warfare and landing vehicles, newly introduced in World War II, allowed the Marine Corps to get into the islands, he explained.

The Naval fleet had been having difficulty reaching some of the islands, and troops had to go in to take the islands, said Racine. The special amphibious vehicles offered additional protection for soldiers and they were able to traverse the coral reefs.

“They carried about 16 troops and their full equipment,” Racine said of the vehicles that came off ships in waves.

Without the added protection the new tanks offered, infantrymen the Marines were transporting “...were getting picked off the boats pretty easy.”

After securing the two islands in the Marshall Islands and getting re-equipped for the next battle, Racine said, “Then we hit Guam, and it took 64 days,” to secure the island.

“After that, we went back to Guadalcanal and got all set up and headed to Okinawa,” for the next battle, which was 92 days in length.

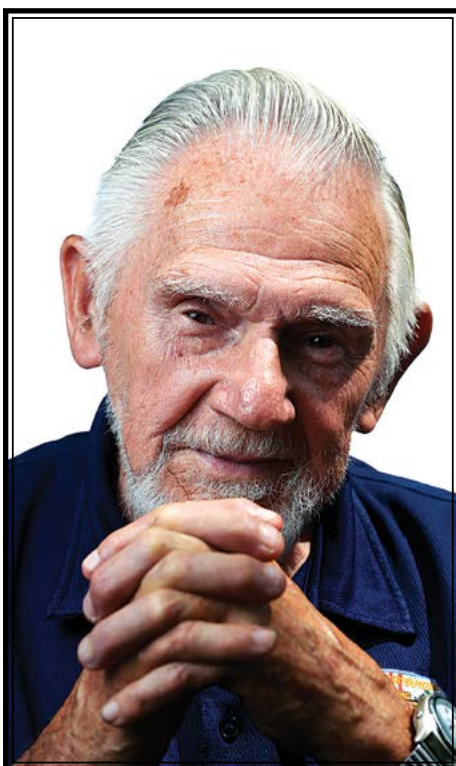
Racine was on a tanker which went back and forth to the front lines, helping to restock the infantry and bring men to the front; they also brought the wounded and dead back.

“That’s what we did from beginning to end,” said Racine of the battle at Okinawa. “That was a terrible time.”

“The Navy corpsmen were great, they did a tremendous job,” Racine said of coordinated efforts between the branches of the service.

At Okinawa, the loss of life on both the American and Japanese sides was stunning, said Racine. “There was more loss in Okinawa than any other battle in the Pacific. We lost as many men as in some of the big battles in Europe. The battle there in history is called the final great battle of World War II.”

Racine’s battalion would go back to Guam



following Okinawa, and he was on Guam when word came that the bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, and it was time to go home to the United States, he remembered.

“When we got the news that the Japanese had surrendered, everybody went wild!” he said.

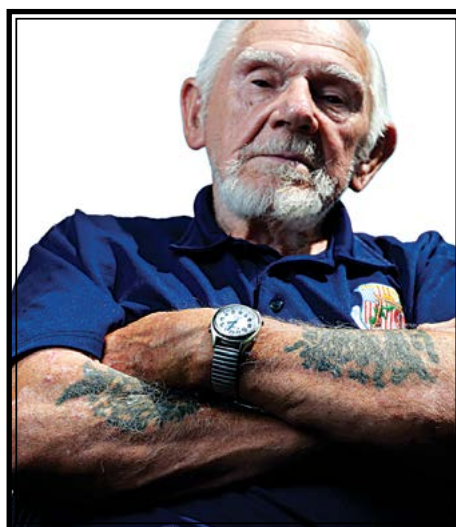
He feels lucky that he made it home to Vermont, and in one piece. “I was so lonesome for home, I felt so lucky that I made it through so much.”

Half of his outfit went on to Japan, and half were able to come home, right around Christmas, 1945.

While he was overseas, Racine’s mom, Mary Louise, who he was very close with, wrote him a letter every single day, he said.

He said he had not slept inside a building for two full years, and it took some readjusting. Getting home and having real milk and butter was a treat.

Racine was presented with the Presidential Citation for the Battle of Okinawa.



JOSEPH RACENET

DOB 11-13-1925
DANVILLE, VT
UNITED STATES NAVY

Joseph Racenet is a retired St. Johnsbury Academy teacher who is a veteran of World War II, having served as a petty officer, second class in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1946. He was born in Queens, New York, and raised in Woodbury, Connecticut. He recalls hitchhiking to New Haven from Woodbury, to enlist with a buddy. They were both 17 years old and Racenet had just finished high school. He was sent first to the Sampson Naval Base in New York, then to Clark Air Base, located on an island in the Philippines.

“As a 17-year-old, it was the patriotic thing to do,” recalled Racenet. “All the young men were in the service.”

One thing Racenet said he’ll always remember is, “Landing at Clark Field on empty return from patrol mission.” They were on patrol and had gone further out than they should have. “We were sweating it out that we had enough fuel, which we did...thankfully,” he remembers still.

“We didn’t consider ourselves ‘The Greatest Generation,’ ” says Racenet. “We just did our duty. I am honored to be one of ‘The Greatest Generation.’”

Racenet was trained in radio and went to gunnery school during his time in the Navy, and flew with a patrol along the coast looking for “any juicy targets we could find!”

After the war, Racenet said he went to visit a teacher in Woodbury, Connecticut, and the man encouraged him to look into teaching, which he did, attending college and becoming a teacher. He stayed with career all his life, retiring from St. Johnsbury Academy after a lengthy career teaching science.



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FRANK RANCLOES

**DOB 10-26-1924
CLARKSVILLE, NH
U.S. MARINE CORPS**

Frank Rancloes was drafted into the 7th Field Depot, attached to the 4th Marine Division.

He was on the Hawaiian island of Oahu and was also in Pearl Harbor, and recalls vividly the devastation he witnessed there.

"We knew who the enemy was and what we were fighting for. We were proud to be an American – to keep America free for all."

Rancloes recalled, "Tokyo Rose was on the radio every night, telling exactly where the 4th Marine Division was. Our ship had to slip away from her, but she knew, we were headed for Saipan where the women were throwing their children off cliffs because they were told we were cannibals."

Rancloes also was sent to Tinian, where he was part of an eight-day battle, and from there, he was sent to Okinawa.

"I was on the USS Matanikau after the Japanese surrender in China, we landed in San Diego."

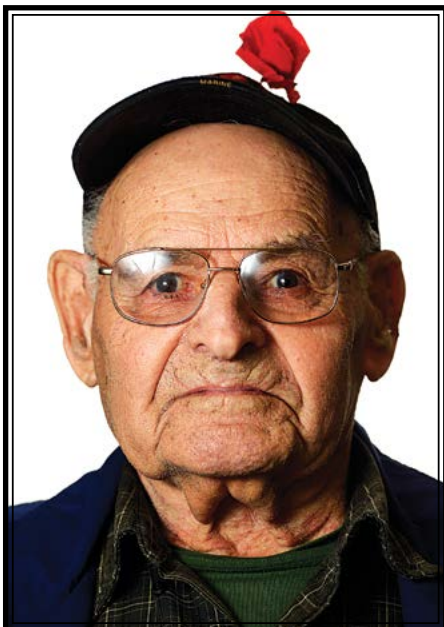
He took a train to Bainbridge, Maryland, and hitchhiked home.

"Back into the woods to work," he said of coming home, where he ran his own business, Rancloes Logging, until he retired at age 70.

Rancloes still attends Marine Corps reunions, and this year attended his 32nd reunion. "I have never missed any and will be going to Warwick, Rhode Island, this year," he said. "Less and less of us are still living...Once a Marine, always a Marine."

Rancloes would not share much of what he witnessed in the war, saying, "Some things you want to try to forget."

He did save a small Japanese flag pierced by a bullet, and has it still.



DAVID TOLL

**DOB 5-6-1925
DANVILLE, VT
UNITED STATES NAVY**

Retired pediatrician David Toll served St. Johnsberry for decades, retiring only in the past year. He was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. At 16, he went to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was enlisted in the V-12 Navy College Training Program and trained to be a corpsman.

The V-12 program's goal was to produce officers and to train more than 200,000 technically trained personnel in fields such as engineering, foreign languages, and medicine during war-time.

Prior to enlisting, Toll was accepted at Western Reserve School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio, and while still in the Navy and part of the V-12 program, he was allowed to return to Cleveland to attend medical school. He served stateside during World War II.

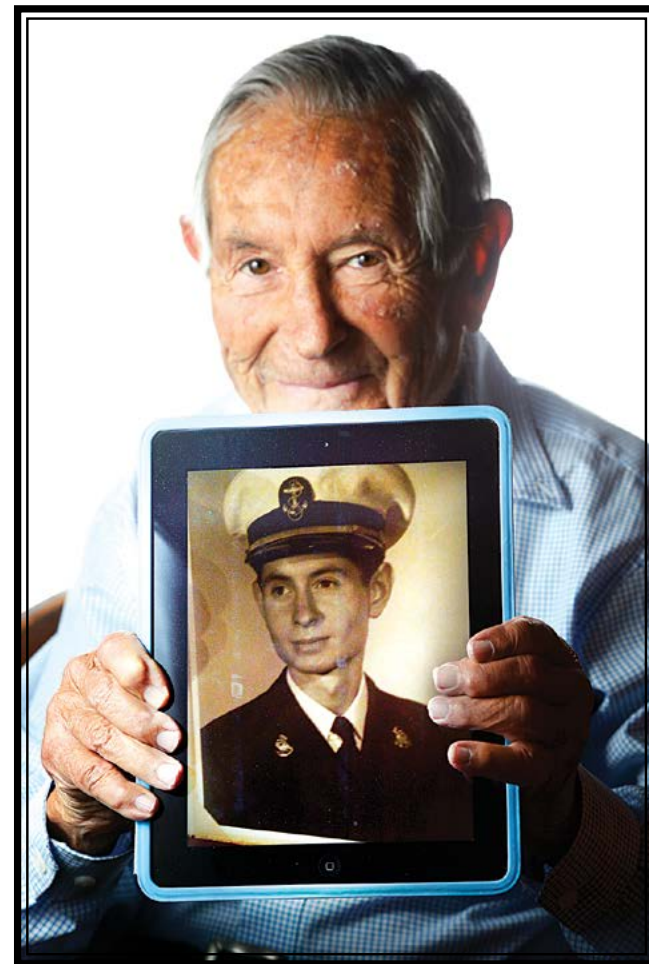
Toll was still on active duty while at medical school, as part of the V-12 Navy program.

The government wanted more doctors trained during that time, and the program helped the nation reach a critical goal.

Following World War II, Toll was drafted as a physician during the Korean War and served in the U.S. Air Force.

Of his service in World War II, Toll said, "I was proud to be in the U.S. Navy."

"As a young man in uniform, I was the recipient of the greatest respect from all walks of life," he recalls of his service years for our nation.



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ALDEN ROBERT TWISS

DOB 3-4-1925
CRAFTSBURY, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY

Alden Robert (Bob) Twiss had first tried to enlist in the Air Corps, but his blood pressure was too high, he said. He was soon drafted into the Army, and was sent to Ft. Devens for training. From there, he was sent to Ft. Ethan Allen, then Camp Keyes, for training for a specialized program for officers which ended up never getting off the ground.

Because of that, Twiss rejoined his unit as it deployed in a huge convoy of ships to England. At one point, Twiss and a handful of other Army men were selected to take a train load of German soldiers who were prisoners up to Scotland, he recalled.

"It was my first contact with the Germans," Twiss recalled. "There were three carloads of them. You might expect that to be a nervous situation, but these fellows knew where they were going and were calm and collected, they were off the front lines," and glad of it, he said.

"They were happy to be safe, they were no problem at all," Twiss recalled "It was a unique experience."

During his time in the service, it was Twiss's role to guard huge storage units in Southampton, England, which contained supplies for the troops going to France.

"The fellow next to me fell asleep," said Twiss of his time guarding the supplies. The soldier earned himself a dishonorable discharge.

It taught Twiss a fast lesson: "If you have a duty, make sure to do it," he said. The supplies contained critical food and equipment the soldiers in France would need to stay alive – it was serious business, said Twiss, today a resident of the Craftsbury Community Care Center.

Twiss came home from the war and became a teacher, starting out at the Craftsbury Academy, and moving on to other schools in Vermont, later becoming a principal, and finally, superintendent in two Vermont school systems before retiring.

After retiring, he served as a superintendent of a school system on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, before coming home to Craftsbury for good.

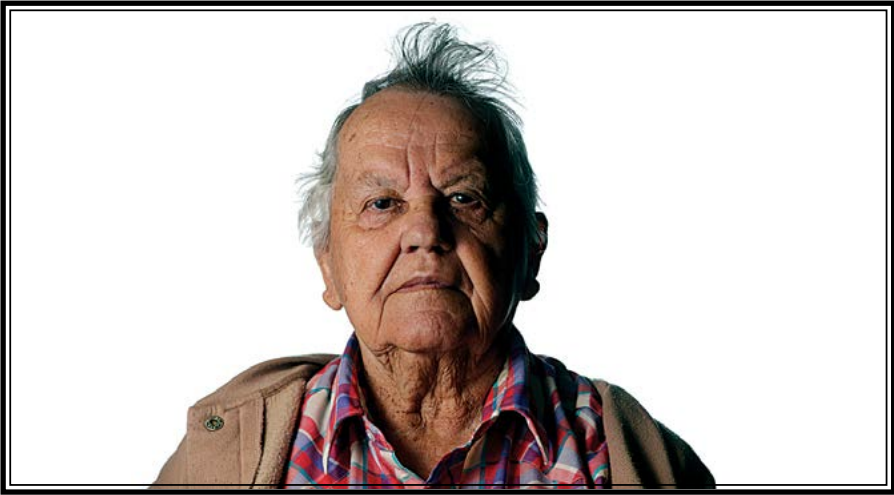
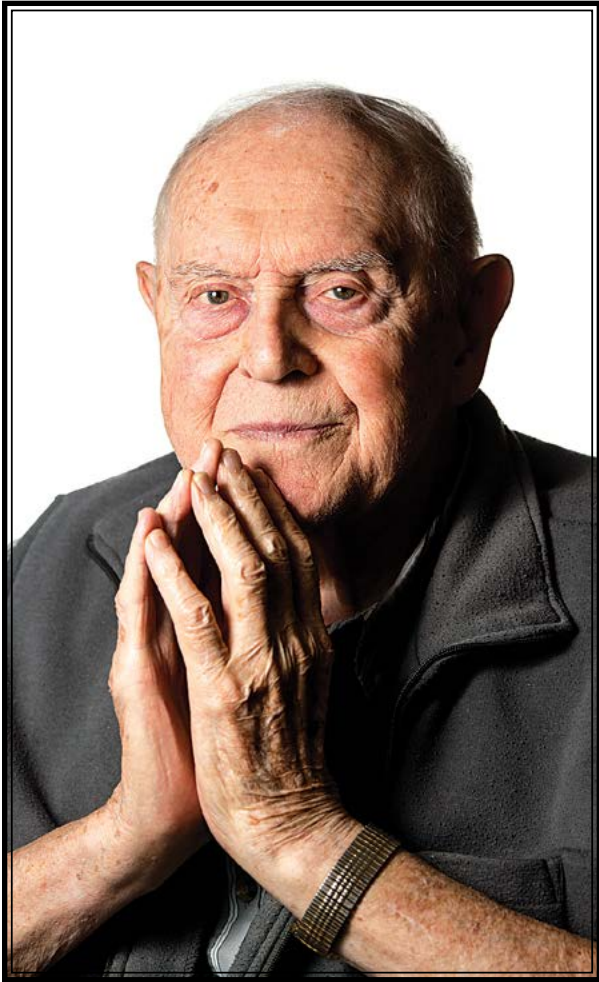
He remembers hearing about the bombs being dropped, and like the rest of the troops, hoping that would mean they would not be invading Japan. He was stationed in the Philippine Islands then, and was watching an outdoor movie with troops when the news came.

"So many people today say that was the cruelest thing to do," Twiss said of the two bombs being dropped on Japan. "The Japanese people suffered," casualties and lasting health issues after, no doubt, said Twiss, "but the other side of the coin is that millions of Japanese people would have been killed and millions of Americans would have been killed. To me, it was proper what was done at that time."

Twiss said, "We came home after that, but not until the next February, in 1946."

Of having served in World War II, Twiss said, "I was proud to be a part of it. It was a time which changed the course of world history, and it really did, not only our country, but Europe and elsewhere." The war effort, too, Twiss said, "unified the United States itself."

"The United States was respected by other countries," said Twiss. "We not only dominated, but showed the skill and the ability to go in and defeat the enemy."



BARBARA WALLING

DOB 4-29-1927
ISLAND POND, VT
WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS - WAC

Barbara Walling, who was raised in Bloomfield, Vermont, served as a WAC. Walling enlisted, and wanted to serve, she said. "Women weren't drafted." She was teaching school in Canaan and was ready for an adventure, and eager to serve the nation, so she signed up.

Walling said she was sent for WAC training for about four months, where marching was one of the main training exercises, and then she was sent to Munich, Germany, where she worked as military personnel in the office.

She said she was out of harm's way, and they were "able to control everything."

Walling said she was proud to be part of the service, and went on to serve in other locations, including Okinawa, later in the war. She ended up staying in the service, retiring from military personnel in the 1970s, after working through the war in Vietnam, doing the same type of work to support the troops.

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DONALD WHEATLEY

**DOB 2-26-1922
NEWPORT, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY**

Donald Wheatley, today a resident of the Bel-Aire Quality Care Center in Newport, has vivid memories of his time as a radio operator in the United States Army Air Force. His service took him to the Middle East, North Africa and the European theaters.

Wheatley enlisted at the end of 1941, just a few weeks after Pearl Harbor. He had been in college, and wanted to serve in the signal corps, he said. "At that time, the Air Force was part of the Army," he explained. "I was interested in radio."

"I was at Northeastern University when Japan bombed us" at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, said Wheatley. He returned home and enlisted in the service on Dec. 30, 1941, signing up in Rutland.

Wheatley was sent to Ft. Devens, Massachusetts, and then to the Windsor Locks Air Base in Connecticut, where troops were housed in tobacco barns made into makeshift barracks. They had little basic training before being sent overseas, he said.

He was part of the 1060th Signal Service Co. of the 323rd Air Service Group, Wheatley said, and was a high-speed code operator, sending and receiving traffic from headquarters to various bomb groups via radio.

"We operated 24 hours a day, so at times I was on a night shift," he said. "We, along with many other units, went aboard the ship Pasteur in the New York harbor," said Wheatley. "On July 12,



1942, we had sailed down around Africa, and up the Red Sea to the lower end of the Suez Canal. In August, we went from there by land to Rayak, Lebanon."

The British ship he was on traveled to Lebanon, near Beirut, then to Syria, said Wheatley, and he was operating radio all the while.

Ultimately, the ship Wheatley served on would work its way up to Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Italy, servicing B-24 bombers, he said.

While serving in the Middle East, the ship Wheatley was on was waiting for its command unit to arrive, but it had not. The United States troops aboard the ship were issued British uniforms, and ate with the British servicemen, while serving on the Louis Pasteur ship, he recalled.

"We became part of a British Royal Air Force (RAF) unit, working, sleeping and eating with them, and we were issued British uniforms until our command unit arrived," said Wheatley. "I do not remember just how long it was. We gradually went to Egypt and as the bomb units we serviced advanced across Africa and into Italy, we followed."

Wheatley said, "Our service unit serviced an American bomb unit that helped the RAF defend the Suez Canal, which they probably could not have done alone."

Wheatley was sent a thank you note and a portrait of the Queen of England a number of years ago, and the token of appreciation is something he hangs over his bed, a nod to his service in World

War II.

The boat was a converted British cruise ship, and was home during the war to some 6,000 servicemen, said Wheatley.

"There were several thousand troops crammed onto that British ship," recalled Wheatley. "It was no luxury trip! We even hit a hurricane going around Africa. I fortunately was one of the very few that did not get sick, and I enjoyed the best meal of the trip: fried herring and onions instead of the usual mutton, mutton, mutton!"

Wheatley is the only man from his unit still alive, he said.

He served for a total of 32 months, and was spared exposure to direct battle. "I was fortunate, I was behind the lines all the time," he said.

"It was my duty to stand up for what was right," said Wheatley of his service during World War II.

Wheatley said many Americans back home did their duty, too, but are often forgotten, including his late wife, Carol, and her father, Leslie Clark, who had served during the war as airplane spotters in Glover, Vermont.



*Thank you to all those who have served
(and to the families who love them).*



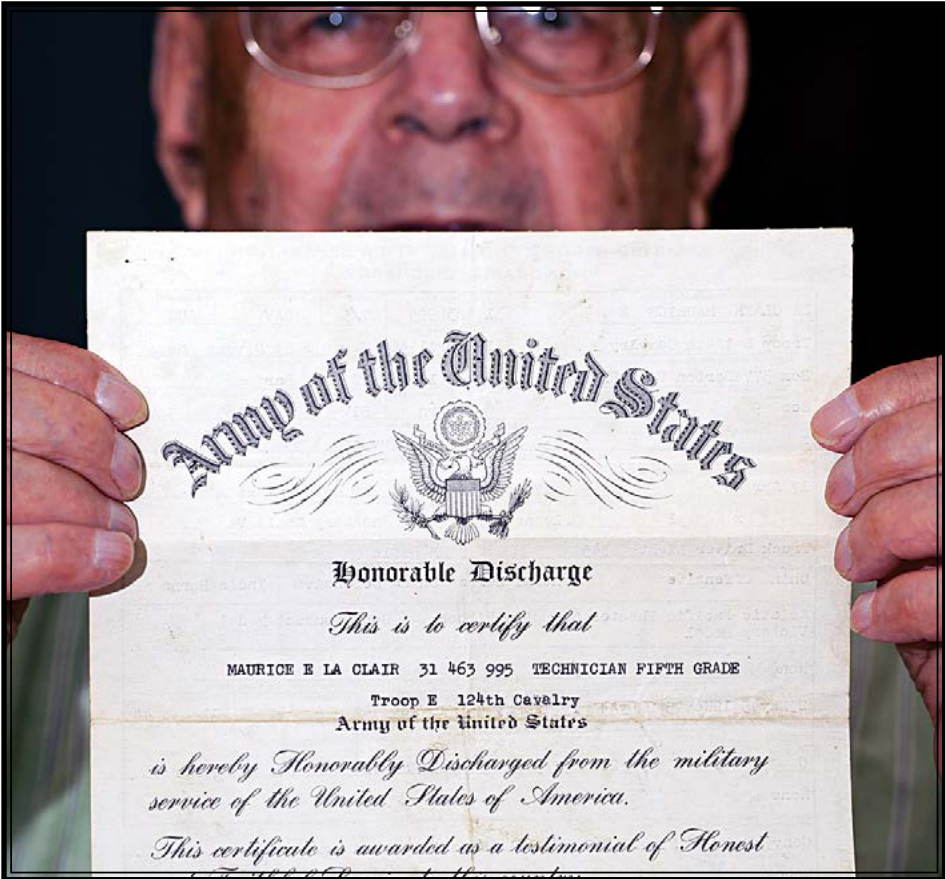
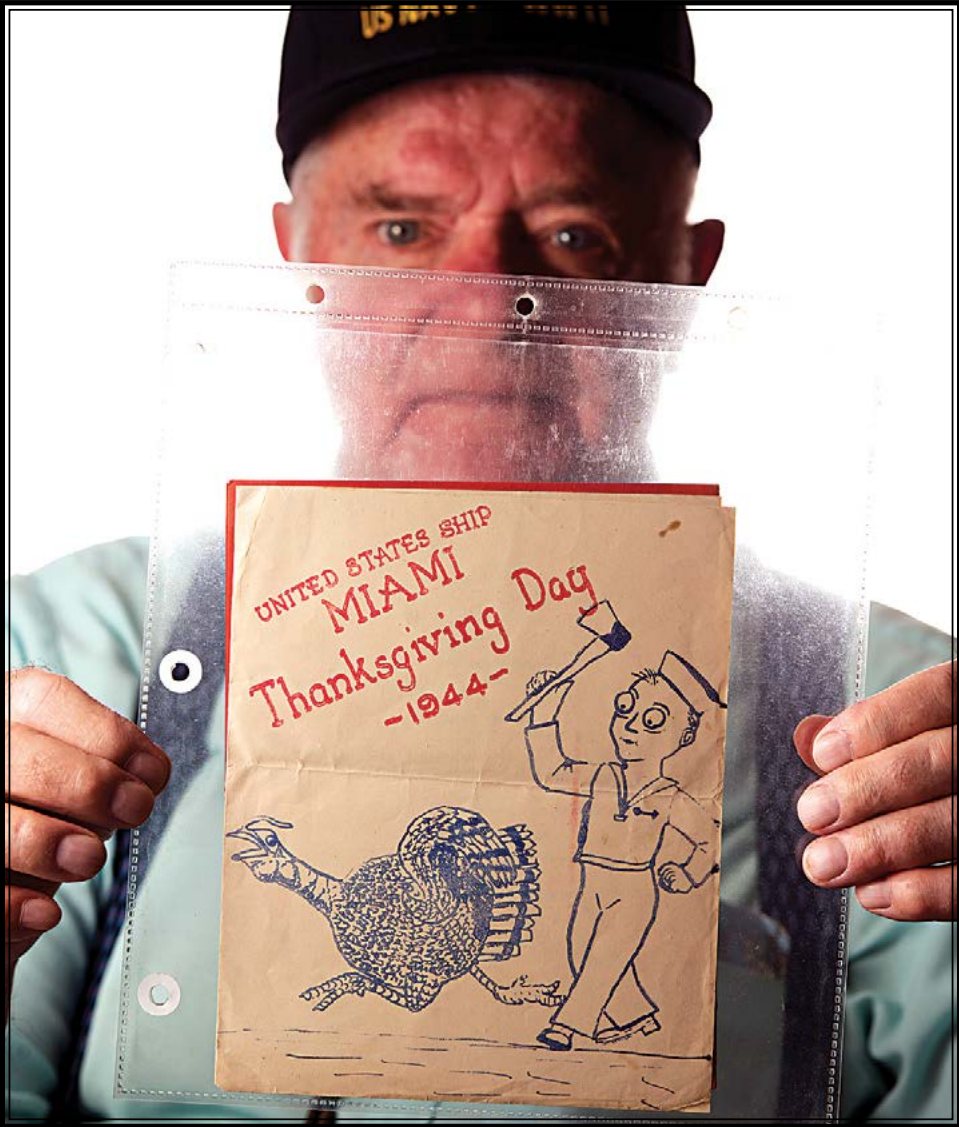
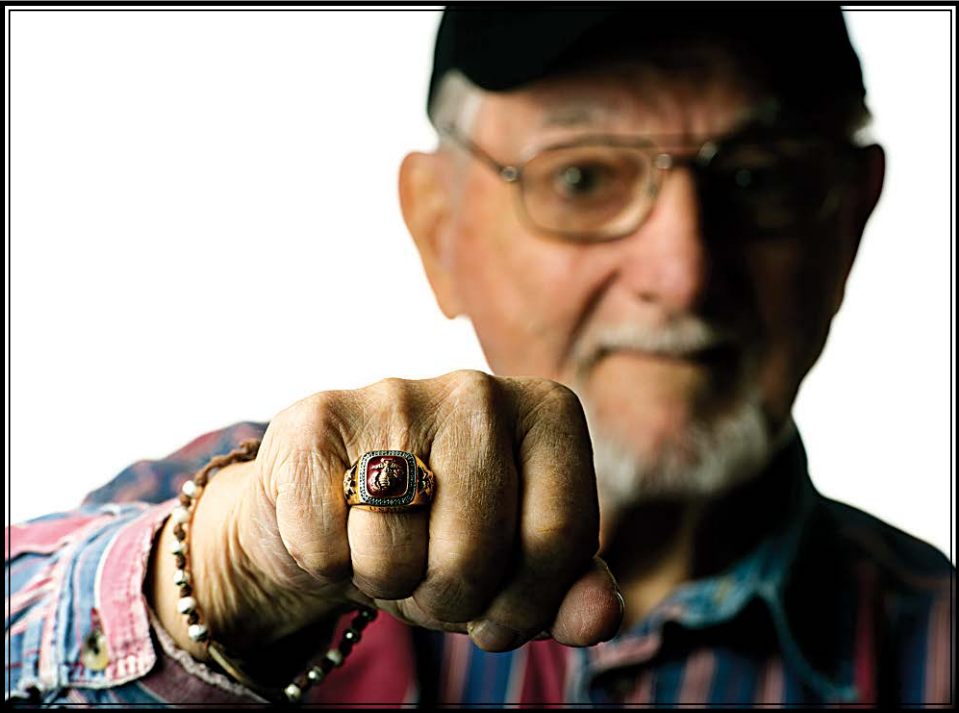
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Upper left: Jacob Kokaly
Upper right: Francis Demuth
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CURTIS WHITEWAY

DOB 11-3-1925

CRAFTSBURY, VT

UNITED STATES ARMY RANGERS

Curtis Whiteway trained in the armored division at Ft. Knox and was sent to Camp Croft to be part of the Rangers during World War II, then to Camp Hale for mountain training exercises, before he and his contingent of about 250 Rangers were sent to join the 99th Infantry Division at Camp Maxie, Texas. He was sent to England in September of 1944, and was “up on line” in combat, by early November 1944.

“I went on the front lines on my 19th birthday,” recalled Whiteway. “I remember because all of my buddies there congratulated me...so it always stood out in my mind.”

Among the elite Ranger force, Whiteway bore witness to some of the most unspeakable horrors of World War II and of what humans are capable of doing to one another – he was on the ground, helping to liberate multiple camps during the Holocaust.

Whiteway’s unit came upon the Death Marches of barely alive men and women being forced to march from camp to camp across Southern Germany.

He vividly recalls seeing death camp victims reaching out to him and his fellow troops, desperate for food, when the troops invaded camps. At one “hospital” he said patients broke down and spoke of babies and children being incinerated in the ovens.

Whiteway has committed himself to educating others, including hundreds of school groups from middle school through college, and making sure that what happened was documented and never forgotten.

“It was a job that had to be done,” Whiteway said. “We were attacked. Our entire nation went to war. Fourteen million to fifteen million men and women went into uniform. We stopped them, came home, and tried to forget the horrors and brutality.”

When people say the Holocaust never happened, prejudice is at the root of that, said Whiteway, “All the evidence is there, but they don’t want to admit it. It’s very hard to understand those people.”

Whiteway has assisted staff at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., with research, eyewitness accounts, and narrative that is part of the permanent archives there, he said.

A letter containing his memories was used to help fundraise to build the Holocaust museum, and he has personally been thanked by family of people he helped to liberate from camps.

For his service in World War II, Whiteway has been presented with the silver star, three bronze stars and three purple hearts. He was also a recipient of the Israeli Medal of Valor as a Right-

teous Gentile, according to a U.S. Senate certificate he was awarded.

The 99th Infantry Division is credited with having liberated the German death and concentration camps of Hadama, Hemer, Hammelburg and Dachau-3-B.

In 2005, at the Capitol Rotunda, Whiteway was invited to light one of the six candles representing the six million victims of the Holocaust during a national ceremony.

Whiteway said when he turned 90, his wife, Ruth, asked him to stop lecturing. He wrote a book, “Brave Men Don’t Cry: The World War II Memories of a Veteran of the 99th Infantry Division Recognized as a Liberator of a Concentration Camp.”

Whiteway was at the Battle of the Bulge and helped with his unit during the last six months of the war to liberate concentration camps and what were termed ‘euthanasia hospitals,’ he said.

As detailed on the back jacket of his book, Whiteway told the men under his command as they were about to enter a concentration camp,

“Just because the other guy goes below that line and becomes an animal does not mean that we shall. An eye for an eye does not put an end to anything and that is what we believe we are here for, to put a stop to all the human misery and go home. We are proud Americans whom the world looks up to as we set the standards for others to follow.”

In one of the chapters of Whiteway’s book, he writes about being in a Belgian town before the Battle of the Bulge, a town that had been overtaken by German forces.

A group of U.S. soldiers came upon Germans shooting at them from a stone wall and a boulevard. Some of the Americans were shooting from buildings.

The shooting stopped suddenly, writes Whiteway.

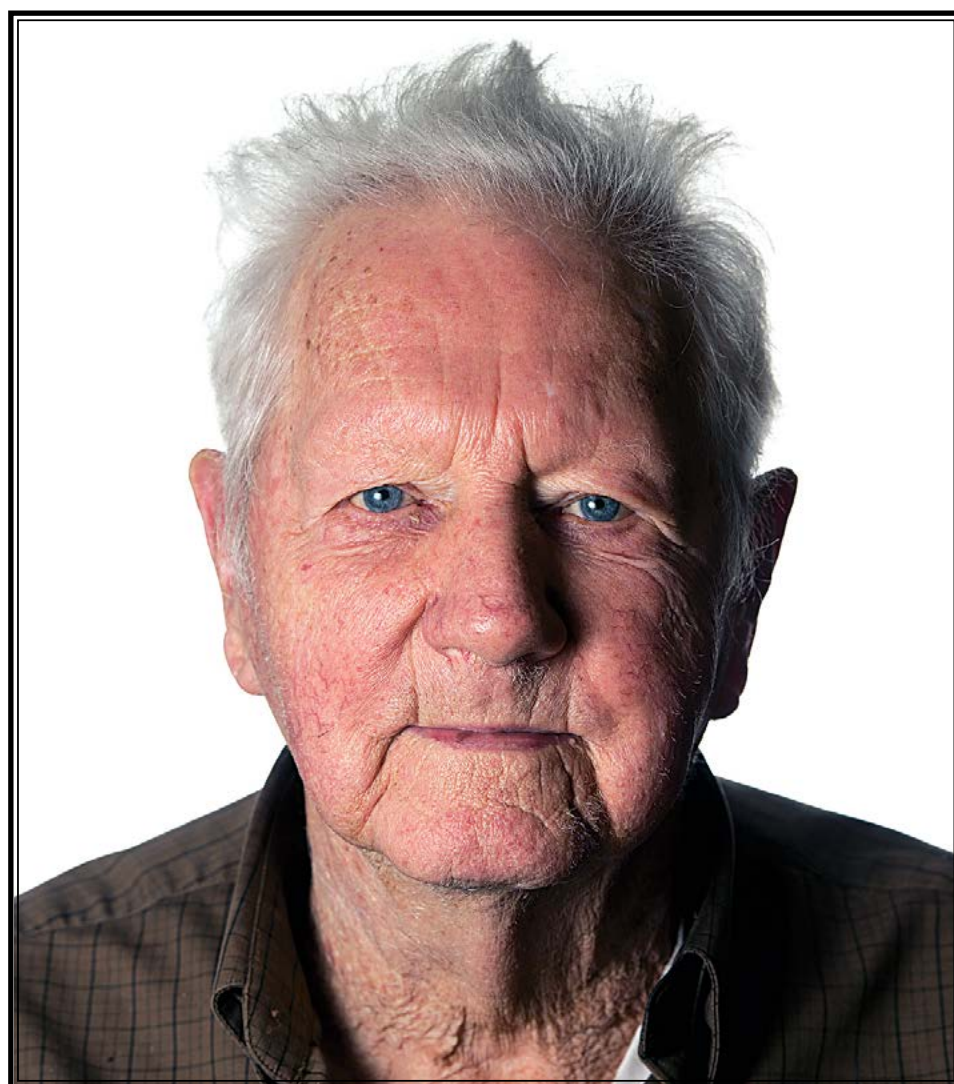
A German soldier came out using a pillow case as a sign of surrender hanging from his gun, the rifle pointed up, and not at the U.S. troops.

Another German followed and laid down his weapon, and was soon followed by a little girl in a party dress. “We had never been trained in psychological warfare and were not prepared for what was to come,” he wrote.

The little girl had something put in her hands by a German officer and he pointed to the U.S. troops and said to her something like, “Now, go to those nice soldiers over there and give them this present.”

It was a grenade.

“I called out for everyone to be quiet. We discussed what we could do. We decided to let her come to us and, when she got close enough, one of us behind the wall would run out, grab the grenade, knock her



down, throw the grenade away from her, then cover her to protect her from the explosion.”

The plan did not work out that way.

“As she got near the man we had chosen to grab the grenade from her, a shot rang out,” Whiteway writes in his war memoir. “A German sniper, who was on the second floor of the building across the street, had shot her. She went down and the grenade exploded.”

Whiteway said he is one of a small number of veterans still alive who witnessed the Holocaust camps.

His unit came upon a “hospital” in Northern Germany surrounded by a 20-foot high wall. They encountered a large group of gaunt prisoners, and the odor coming from them was horrid, he said.

The prisoners had been tasked with burying the remains of those who died or were killed by the Nazis, and themselves were starved, their eyes sunken, no hair, said Whiteway.

They were among a group of Jews brought in from a nearby camp to help dispose of evidence at the “hospital,” that was used as a facility where atrocities were committed. Those prisoners, too, would be executed, he said, after burial detail, “because they were eyewitnesses,” to what had happened.

When the U.S. soldiers stormed the hospital, Whiteway said, “The patients began taking us around, showing us all the atrocities. In the basement, was a gas chamber and the ovens... The odor was just absolutely appalling.”

The camp was listed as a T-4 euthanasia camp, said Whiteway, who helped document the camp

for the Holocaust Museum. At first those euthanasia camps were used to eliminate people who were mentally ill, “they used it as an excuse to get rid of people they saw as useless, and they ate food.”

“Then they began bringing in people who were different,” and their fate was the same horror, said Whiteway.

Little was known about the euthanasia camps, and because the 19-year-old Whiteway saw them firsthand, he committed himself to making sure what happened was not forgotten.

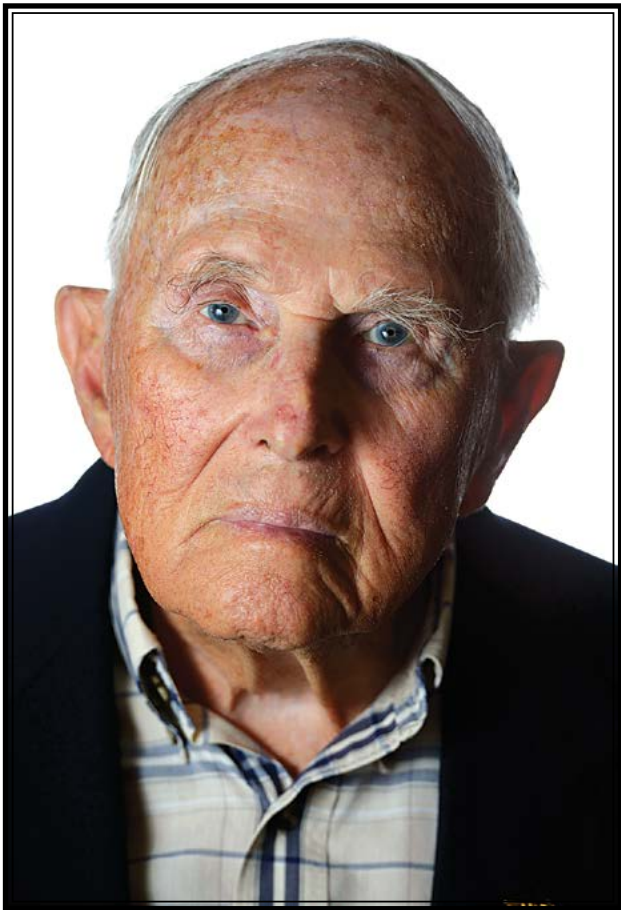
Whiteway himself looked into the ovens and witnessed as a young man’s body burned in the ovens. He said some of the patients began sobbing and telling the soldiers about “small children and babies being burned alive.”

In 1998, Whiteway was invited to speak about the Holocaust in Connecticut, and after he spoke, a woman approached him and told him she had been at the Dachau 3-B camp, which Whiteway and the Rangers had liberated. She rolled up her sleeve to show him the numbers on her arm.

“One day the SS came for me,” the woman told him. “They told me to strip and that I was to shower. I was pushed into a shower full of other nude women and girls and the door slammed behind me. We knew. We waited and nothing happened. The gas didn’t come. We waited a very long time. Suddenly, the door was opened and strange men told us to come out. It was the liberators - your men! You see, we were in Dachau 3-B!”

“With that, she hugged me, and we both cried,” Whiteway writes in his memoir.

ROBERT WHITNEY JR.



DOB 11-10-20
FRANCONIA, NH
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Robert Whitney Jr. left mid-stream from Williams College to enter the Marine Corps during World War II. A native of Lexington, Mass., he says he went into Boston when he enlisted to serve.

“I wanted to be a pilot,” he said, and that’s what he became.

Whitney was sent for training at a number of college campuses with other pilots being trained for war service. From there, he went to the Naval Air Station in Chicago, where he and the other pilots learned how to land on a carrier, preparing them for deployment.

The pilots worked with flight simulators to learn how to land on carriers and practiced a great deal, he said.

Whitney flew out of Jacksonville, Florida, to land on carriers in the Atlantic, preparing him for his expected role in the war. He passed all his landings, he said.

“It takes a lot of training and it takes the right equipment,” he said. From the air, the size of a carrier deck to land on seemed so small, said Whitney, who still has the leather helmet and gloves from his pilot training days.

In the end, said Whitney, he was not deployed. He was ready to go, and trained, but the war ended.

“Everyone was going into the service,” recalled Whitney of his decision to enlist. “The United States of America put everything aside to build a force to beat the Germans and the Japanese. All of the factories, all of the services, all of the civilians were involved in fighting against the axis,” he said. “Everybody was involved. It was a terrible time.”



ANSON WILLARD

DOB 11-21-1921
NEWPORT, VT
UNITED STATES ARMY

Anson Willard, 95, grew up in Derby, and was part of the D-Day invasion. He was struck by a piece of shrapnel that pierced his lung right above his heart and came out of his back. Willard points to the parts of his body injured, and said he was part of the 83rd infantry division in the Army.



Willard was in France when he was struck, he said, and was 21 years old. “I was drafted,” he said, “I didn’t try to dodge it or anything.”

“I had quite a time,” he said, speaking softly about what he can recall all those years ago.

Still, says Willard, a resident of the Bel-Aire Quality Care Center in Newport, “I was lucky.”

“I remember it as pretty rough going,” he said of the war. “The bullets were going by ... I remember a lot of bullets went through the air, and there were a lot of wounded men.”

Willard said of his war time, “I don’t dwell on it.”

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