

The Greater Central Texas Council of the
Navy League of the United States
proudly recognizes

**Men and Women
of the
“Greatest Generation”**



December 2008

THE GREATEST GENERATION

Presented December 4, 2008, Greater Central Texas
Council of the Navy League of the U. S.

Seated with us tonight are men and women of the *Greatest Generation* any society has ever produced. They represent all those US citizens who fought in World War II, as well as those who kept the home front intact and productive. DEC 7, 1941, PEARL HARBOR – the day 67 years ago that changed their lives – and your lives – forever. I'll bet every veteran here can tell you exactly where he or she was that day.

America is filled with thousands of gray-haired and bald-headed heroes who answered the call to save the world from the two of the most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled. At a time in their lives when their days and nights should have been filled with innocent adventure, love, and the lessons of the work-a-day world, they were fighting in the most primitive conditions possible across the bloody landscapes of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the countless islands and waters of the Pacific. Still other men and women were back home in the United States producing the weapons and supporting the effort required to win the war.

The nation turned to its young to carry the heaviest burden, to fight in enemy territory in order to keep the home front secure and productive. These young men and women understood what was required of them and they stepped forward to do their duty.

Young men joined the military by the hundreds of thousands. Farm kids from the Great Plains who never expected to see the ocean signed up for the Navy, brothers followed brothers into the Marines, young adventurers fascinated by the new frontiers of flight volunteered for pilot training. Single young women poured into Washington to fill the exploding need for help as our capital mobilized for war. Other women, their husbands or boyfriends off to basic training, learned to drive trucks or handle welding torches.

This generation was united not only by a common purpose, but also by common values — duty, honor, courage, service, love of family and country and, above all, individual responsibility.

They fought not for fame and recognition, but because it was the right thing to do. They came of age during the Great Depression and World War II, and came home to build an even stronger America

More than 16 million men and women served in our Armed Forces during World War II. Today there are less than 4 million of these men and women, – the Veterans of World War II – still alive.

These veterans sitting before you tonight are indeed members of the *Greatest Generation* and the true heroes of World War II – we welcome the chance to honor them and their sacrifices.



DONNA BALDWIN

was born in July, 1924. After graduating from high school she worked for Southwestern Bell, deciding to join the Marines when she was 20. Donna enlisted in November, 1944 and was sent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina for boot camp. Upon completion, she was a private first class, and was assigned to work in the Casualty Department of the Marine Corps in Washington. She recalled; "Boy, was that torture!!! - All of those poor guys in such pain and stress." One day a lady came down the hall saying "We need a telephone operator to go to Hawaii." Donna said "That's me"!! After overseas training at Camp Pendleton she set sail for Hawaii, but got sick before they were twenty miles out and stayed that way. You couldn't throw up overboard, you might leave a sign for a Japanese sub. Peace was declared on the way to Hawaii and that was fine. Donna returned to the US in November and worked as a telephone operator until she was discharged as a corporal in May, 1946.



JIM BURRILL

was born in November, 1924 in Yakima, Washington. Jim attended the U. S. Naval Academy and was commissioned in June 1945. His first assignment as a commissioned officer was the light cruiser USS ASTORIA (CL-90). In July and August, 1945, ASTORIA screened the carriers of Task Force 38 as they launched their planes at the Japanese home islands. During that time, ASTORIA and Cruiser Division 17 conducted two anti-shipping sweeps along the Japanese coast. After hostilities ceased on the 15th of August, ASTORIA continued to patrol off Honshu with Task Force 38 until September 3rd when she received orders to return to the United States. ASTORIA was awarded one battle star in World War II. Later, Burrill served in the seaplane tender USS FLOYDS BAY (AVP-40). He remained in the Navy and retired as a captain, engineering duty officer after 31 years of service. Burrill is a past president of the Greater Central Texas Council of the Navy League.

HUME COFER

was born July 1923 in Austin. He graduated from Austin High School in 1940 and attended the University of Texas graduating with a BA degree but not enough NROTC courses for a Navy commission. He was then assigned to midshipman school at Northwestern University in Chicago, and commissioned as ensign in May 1944. Cofer was sent to Hawaii and then on an old, slow Dutch freighter to Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Emirau, back to Bougainville, and then to Green Island. He was assigned as assistant officer in charge, of an old landing craft tank (LCT) — a flat, powered barge about 130 feet long and 35 feet wide, with living quarters for officers and men in a steel box on the stern. The LCTs went alongside ships in the harbor (and sometimes in the open ocean), unloaded troops and supplies from ships and brought them to the beaches. In the summer of 1944, the LCTs loaded three divisions leaving Bougainville to go north for Macarthur's "return" to the Philippines. At the same time they brought in four Australian battalions to hold Bougainville Island. Long hours of work and the general conditions caused Cofer to contract "yellow jaundice" which we know as Hepatitis. He was treated in an Australian tent hospital and missed any real combat. The only excitement was when there was a fire on the LCT next to them on the beach when they had a deck loaded with very flammable empty aircraft fuel drums, resulting in a hasty retreat. After the war, Cofer returned to Austin and went to UT Law School.



JACK COOK

was born in 1924 in Ballinger, Texas. He graduated from Austin High School and enlisted in the US Marine Corps in September 1941. After the Pearl Harbor attack, he was assigned to the marine detachment aboard the light cruiser USS HELENA (CL-50). HELENA arrived at Guadalcanal in August 1942, four days after the first Marines landed. HELENA then participated in shore bombardments and several night ship-to-ship engagements with the Japanese Navy in what has been called the wildest and most savage naval engagement since the battle of Jutland, in an area that earned the nickname of "Iron Bottom Bay." Cook returned to the US in April 1943 for naval flight training; HELENA was sunk in July 1943. After being commissioned a second lieutenant naval aviator in the Marine Corps, he spent the remainder of the war flying F4U Corsair fighter planes from the escort carrier USS RENDOVA (CVE-114) as a member of VMF 214, the famous Black Sheep Squadron, which had been "Pappy" Boyington's Squadron. Cook left the Marine Corps as a captain in October 1946 having earned seven ribbons, including the pre-Pearl Harbor Ribbon, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Presidential and Navy Unit Citations, and the Asiatic/Pacific Campaign Ribbons with four battle stars.



JOSEPH COOK

enlisted in the Navy in December 1942 and served at Norfolk, VA, Miami, Little Creek (VA) and Mobile, AL prior to being posted to the Admirable-class minesweeper USS Phantom (AM 273,) which was transferred to the Pacific in the waning days of the war. The Phantom transited the Panama Canal 9 April 1945 and reached Pearl Harbor 4 May. Continuing from there, she reached Okinawa 26 June and swept mines for the remainder of the war off that hard-fought island. Cook spent 90 days in and around Kobe and Osaka after the surrender.



Photo Not Available



TOM COX

was born in July 1925 in Dallas. He enlisted in the Navy in December 1942 and was assigned to the Naval ROTC unit at Rice University. After graduation from Rice in June 1945, he was commissioned as an ensign. Cox's first Navy assignment was to the technical radar school at Bowdoin College in Maine, followed by an assignment to the small sea plane tender USS BARNEGAT (AVP 10). Cox was discharged from active duty in July 1946.

CHARLEY FERGUSON

was born in December 1917 near Monticello, Arkansas. He entered the Navy in January 1936, attending boot camp in San Diego. Ferguson was on the heavy cruiser USS ASTORIA (CA-34) assigned to the engineering department when it left in March 1939 to return the ashes of the Japanese ambassador to Yokohama, Japan. When they arrived the ship's crew was greeted with a very formal garden party in their honor. While assigned to the attack transport USS REPUBLIC (AP-33), in February 1943 in Australia, he was promoted to chief warrant officer. During his 26-year Navy career Ferguson served on cruisers, mine warfare ships, fleet oilers, a repair ship and various amphibious ships. He retired after 26 years active duty in 1962 with 14 ribbons, 7 battle stars and the rank of commissioned warrant officer (W-3).



BERNIE HILLEN

was born in April 1924 in Detroit and graduated from high school in Caledonia, Michigan in 1942. He was accepted in the Naval Air Corps program but was reassigned due to vision problems. He then completed boot camp at Great Lakes and was assigned to the V-12 Program at Northwest Missouri State College. In February 1944 he transferred to the NROTC Program at the University of Texas and was commissioned as ensign in November 1945. Assigned to the minesweeper USS CHIEF (AM-315) as engineering officer, he reported aboard Christmas Eve, 1945 in Sasebo, Japan. Hillen earned one battle star aboard the CHIEF for mine clearing in the Tsushima Straits. He was a member of the Navy Reserve until his retirement after 20 years of service.



HORACE JOHNSON

was born in Bynum, Texas in July 1921. He entered the Navy and the Office of Strategic Services in February 1942 and attended school under General "Wild Bill" Donovan. He made three combat parachute jumps, and recalls that the best adventure was the hijacking of a train with five men on detached duty. He also survived a bombing attack on Funafuti Island, south of Tarawa. Johnson took part in the Luzon invasion in the Philippines in January 1945 aboard the amphibious attack transport USS ZEILIN (APA 3.) After leaving Luzon in a convoy of 36 ships, a Japanese Kamikaze plane missed the amphibious command ship USS Mount Olympus (AGC-8) and hit the ZEILIN, causing extensive topside damage. Seven crew members were killed, three declared missing, and 30 were injured. Johnson worked with the chaplain burying sailors at sea. He retired in 1972 as a chief warrant officer.



Photo Not Available

TOM LASSETER

was born in Knox City, Texas, in January 1926. He volunteered for the Navy in 1943, two days before graduating from Mexia High School, and was assigned to the Navy V-12 program. Commissioned an ensign at age 19 yrs 1½ months from midshipman school at the University of Notre Dame in March 1945, Lasseter then completed sound school, and was assigned as anti-submarine warfare officer on the destroyer escort USS JOHN C. BUTLER (DE-339), a unit of the "Taffy 3" Task Group in the Battle off Samar. The BUTLER later rode out the October 1945 typhoon that did major damage to Okinawa, sinking 22 ships, grounding 222, and damaging 32 beyond repair. Lasseter was released from active duty in July 1946 and volunteered for the Korean War in September 1950. He was assigned to the destroyer USS HANK (DD-702). Lasseter retired from the Navy as a lieutenant commander after 22 years of service, with 12 campaign ribbons, including the Combat Action Ribbon and 4 battle stars. Lasseter is a past president of the Greater Central Council of the Navy League.



PAT LUCKETT

was an 18-year old freshman in college when he joined the Marine Corps in February 1944. After boot camp in San Diego he was sent to the 3rd Marine Division on its way to invade Guam. In February 1945, the 3rd joined the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions to take the island of Iwo Jima. After many casualties to the 4th and 5th on D-Day, the 3rd Division spent D+1 in landing craft because of the death and destruction on the beaches. They finally landed on D+2. Luckett was digging a foxhole when “Old Glory” was raised on Mount Suribachi. On March 8th, Luckett and three others were sent forward with stretchers to bring back wounded. A mortar landed nearby and all four were wounded. He was evacuated to the hospital ship *GOOD SAMARITAN*. In June 1945, Luckett was among 30 marines from the 3rd Division sent back to Camp Lejeune to go officer candidate school. They landed in Seattle on V-J night. Luckett was separated from active duty in September of 1945.



Photo Not Available



JACK MARONEY

was born in November 1924 in Dallas, and enrolled at the University of Texas in 1941. In early 1943, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and was called to active duty shortly thereafter. He attended boot camp and the Marine sea school in San Diego. Upon completion, he served as a 20-mm gunnery instructor before being transferred to the Marine Barracks, Bremerton, Washington. Maroney then joined the Marine detachment aboard the aircraft carrier *USS ENTERPRISE (CV-6)*. Maroney's primary duties for the next 23 months were as a gunner on a 20-mm anti-aircraft gun. The “Big E” received 18 battle stars in the Pacific-Asian Theater for WWII, and was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. Maroney participated in 12 of those naval engagements. He was discharged in September 1945 with the rank of corporal.

WILLIAM H. MAYS

was born in Round Rock in 1925. In his junior year at L.C. Anderson High School he dropped out and entered active duty in the Marine Corps in October 1943. He was sent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina where he was assigned to the 20th Marine Depot Company. Prior to WWII, there had never before been any black troop units in the history of the Marine Corps. Mays reported in just when large numbers of black Marines were being formed into ammunition and depot companies. He was deployed to the Pacific Theatre. Mays' 20th Marine Depot Company participated in the invasion of Saipan; going ashore on the first day, June 15, 1944. Captain William C. Adams, company commander of the 20th Depot Company, later reported, *"My company landed about 2 PM on D-Day supporting the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division. These were the first negro troops ever to go into action in the Marine Corps....Private Kenneth Tibbs, who died of wounds on D-Day, was the first Black Marine fatality from enemy action in WWII."* The 20th was shipped from Saipan to Okinawa during the April 1945 assault landings on that island. After the end of the war in the Pacific, Mays' company was sent to Tsingtao, China, in support of the 6th Marine Division, Third Amphibious Corps. Chinese laborers were employed to do most of the work in moving supplies so the troops of the 20th Depot Company served as security and guards as the Third Amphibious Corps repatriated Japanese troops and civilians from Northern China back to their Japanese homeland. Upon completion of that mission, the 20th Depot Company sailed for San Diego. When they arrived at Camp Pendleton, California, the company was inactivated and Mays was discharged. Mays joined the Army June 11, 1948 during the Korean War. He retired in 1966 having received the Bronze Star for valor and a Purple Heart.



CHARLES H. (TIM) MCCOY

was born in 1924 in San Angelo, Texas. His family moved to Dallas where he enlisted in the Navy and entered active duty in November 1941. After boot camp in San Diego he was assigned to the submarine USS TROUT (SS-202). During its second war patrol, TROUT delivered ammunition to the besieged garrison on Corregidor and took aboard gold, silver and other securities — the Philippine Government treasury — that had been moved there for safekeeping. On February 4th, 1942, TROUT slipped away from Corregidor, successfully evaded the Japanese, and arrived at Pearl Harbor. The precious cargo was then transported to the United States for safekeeping. McCoy earned a Silver Star for that action aboard TROUT, which was also awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Subsequently, McCoy was assigned to the submarine USS GRENADIER (SS-210) as a seaman first class. The night of April 20, 1943, during its 6th war patrol in the Straits of Malacca about ten miles northwest of Penang Island, GRENADIER was discovered, attacked and damaged by enemy aircraft. Losing all power and lighting, the submarine sank in 270 feet of water and settled to the bottom while still leaking badly with a fire burning in the control cubicle. After lying helpless on the bottom for nearly an entire day, and against all odds, the crew was able to effect repairs sufficiently to raise the disabled vessel to the surface just as night fell. With only one damaged propeller shaft operable, GRENADIER could barely move on the surface and was unable to dive. When detected by a Japanese ship and again attacked by an aircraft, Captain Fitzgerald ordered the crew to scuttle the sub. All hands were taken prisoner and brought ashore at Penang. There they were confined in a convent, suffering cruel torture at the hands of interrogators every day for the next five months. The men scratched their names on two sections of a wall and on one of the wooden doors. Those are maintained to this day by the convent as a tribute to the “brave crew of an American submarine.” From Penang, they were moved to Changi Prison in Singapore and after two months were sent to Yokohama, Japan. In Yokohama, the crew of GRENADIER was split up and McCoy was sent to Fukuoka #3 Camp on the southernmost island of Kyushu. He remained in that POW camp as a slave laborer until the end of the war. He worked in the Yahata Steel Mills, which at that time was the second largest steel mill and shipyard in the world. After WWII, McCoy remained in the Navy and was commissioned an ensign in July 1958. Except for the period when he had been a prisoner of war, his entire time was in Pacific Fleet submarine related assignments. McCoy retired in June 1965 as a lieutenant with more than 24 years of active-duty service.



ALVINO MENDOZA

was born in Round Rock in March 1926. He dropped out of Austin High School and joined the Navy in May 1944. He was sent to boot camp for amphibious forces at Camp Wallace near Houston and then to Camp Elliott in San Diego. From there, he was sent to the seaplane tender USS ST. GEORGE (AV-16). Mendoza's job aboard ship was as a 20-mm gunner. In September 1944, the tender spent time in the Marshall Islands at Einewetok and Kwajalien then in the Marianas, Pelilieu and Siapan. Later, while at Keramo Retto in the Ryukyu Island chain, the ship was hit by a Kamikaze on May 6, 1945. After repairs in Guam, ST. GEORGE returned to Okinawa on 21 August 1945. In September 1945 they left for aircraft support duties in Japan. They arrived at Sasebo 14 November 1945 and remained on station there until leaving for the United States, arriving 25 March 1946. Mendoza was discharged in May 1946 as a seaman first class with four campaign ribbons and two battle stars.



JACK N. MILLER

was born in San Antonio in November, 1926. In January 1944, he enlisted in the Navy. After boot camp and sonar school in San Diego, he transferred to Norfolk, Virginia and trained with the first crew of the destroyer escort CHARLES E. BRANNON (DE-446,) which was commissioned in Brooklyn in November 1944. After a shakedown cruise to Bermuda, the ship left New York, transited the Panama Canal, and proceeded to the Philippines. BRANNON operated in and around the Philippines and later the island of Morotai. From there, BRANNON was part of the escort for two invasions of Borneo with all Australian troops — first, at Tarakan on east coast and then Brunei on the west cost. The BRANNON then went to Okinawa late in the Kamikaze campaign. With the war in the Pacific ending, they went into Shanghai and then Hong Kong and returned to San Francisco in February 1946. Miller was discharged with the rank of second class sonarman.

MARVIN W. MORGENROTH

was born in November 1921 in Bishop, Texas. He joined the Navy in February 1942 in Houston and went to boot camp in San Diego. From there he went to radioman school at the University of Wisconsin, then to Mare Island in California. He was assigned to the Headquarters Company, Construction Battalion 34 (CB-34) on Florida Island (within sight of Guadalcanal) landing in March 1943, near the end of the Guadalcanal campaign. The battalion became a part of ACORN RED 4 at the seaplane base on Florida Island for the next year. Morgenroth's unit was comprised of three companies: one all white and the other two all black. Morgenroth completed his Navy service as a radioman second class at Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi.



VIC NIEMEYER

was born in September 1919. He enlisted in the Navy in August 1941 in Houston, Texas and was appointed a midshipman, USNR in October 1941. He attended reserve officers' training School, V-7, at Northwestern University in Chicago and was commissioned on January 16, 1942. Assigned to the submarine USS R-18 (SS-95), Niemeyer completed two war patrols in the Atlantic. The R-18 also served as a training submarine for US and allied escort vessels in the Atlantic and Caribbean. From February 1944 to October 1945, he served aboard the submarine USS SEACAT (SS-339), completing four Pacific war patrols while serving as torpedo officer, first lieutenant, diving officer, and navigator. USS SEACAT headed toward the Kuril Islands on 6 August 1945 for her fourth and last war patrol but, upon arrival in her patrol area, learned that hostilities with Japan had ended. The submarine was ordered to proceed to Tokyo Bay during the formal surrender ceremony on 2 September 1945. Niemeyer was released from active duty in December 1945 having achieved the rank of lieutenant.



Photo Not Available



KEN PETTICREW

spent one year at Virginia Tech and was offered an appointment to the Naval Academy with the class of 1945. On Dec 7th, when the attack on Pearl Harbor was reported, all academy personnel were assigned duty and anyone who had left the yard was ordered to return immediately. The gates were secured, sandbagged, and guarded by armed Marines. Petticrew was assigned the mid-watch, patrolling the third wing basement armed with a .45 pistol. After graduation in June 1945, he reported for duty aboard USS MARYLAND (BB-46) as assistant chief engineer. The MARYLAND was in port undergoing repairs in Puget Sound after its third Kamikaze attack. They were headed out of Puget Sound when the war ended. After the war, the Maryland was part of "Operation Magic Carpet," bringing combat troops back from Hawaii to ports along the West Coast. Petticrew retired with the rank of lieutenant commander.

ORAN K. PERCY

was born in July 1919 in Belles, Texas, northeast of Dallas. Percy was married and had two children when he enlisted in the Navy in 1943. He was assigned as an electronics seaman to the amphibious command and communications ship USS ANCON (AGC-4). The ship and its mission were so secretive that the Navy denied its existence. The ANCON served as the command ship for the invasions of Tinian, Saipan and Okinawa. Five days before the Japanese surrendered, ANCON sailed into Tokyo Bay and was directly alongside the USS MISSOURI when the surrender was signed. The ANCON communications system broadcasted the signing, which Percy witnessed. Percy left the Navy in 1945.



Photo Not Available

SAM SORENSON

was born in May 1916 in Holden, Utah. He joined the Navy in March 1941, at the Naval Reserve Air Base, Oakland, California. He served in a **FLEET AIR PHOTOGRAPHIC SQUADRON** (VD-2) at the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, and then at Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi. Sam served on the staffs of Fleet Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Halsey during 1944, in several other Pacific Command staffs, on board the battleship USS MISSISSIPPI (BB-41,) and aboard the light cruiser USS HONOLULU (CL-48). He was a member of the Navy's first combat photography unit and later the commanding officer of the Naval Photo Science Lab, Anacostia, in the District of Columbia. He was separated as a lieutenant in January 1946 and retired from the Navy Reserve as a lieutenant commander. During his service, Sorenson was awarded the American Campaign Ribbon, the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Ribbon (4 Stars) and the WWII Victory Ribbon.



GABRIEL TAMAYO

was born in Lockhart, in August 1925. He enlisted in the Marines in December 1943 before graduating from high school. He went to boot camp in San Diego, then to Camp Pendleton. From May 1944 to January 1946, Tamayo was a machine gun crewman participating in campaigns in New Caledonia, the Solomon and Ryukyu Islands, Palau, and China. Tamayo saw action at Peleliu and was wounded on Okinawa on 30 June 1945. Returning home, he joined the Marine Reserve unit in Austin and was sent to Korea where he participated in the retreat from the Chosin Reservoir. He was discharged in September 1951 as a sergeant with eleven ribbons, including the Purple Heart, three Presidential Unit Citations, one Navy Unit Citation, and four battle stars.

HOWARD TUCKER

was born in September 1925. He entered the Navy in January, 1943. After completing boot camp, he was assigned to the battleship USS CALIFORNIA (BB-44), a Pearl Harbor attack survivor. The CALIFORNIA conducted shore bombardment for six major Pacific invasions. They were also involved with inflicting major damage on the Japanese fleet in the battle of Surigao Strait in October 1944. In January 1946, Tucker was transferred to the transport USS GENERAL BUTNER (AP-113). He participated in the Korean War and the testing of nuclear weapons at Bikini Island. Later, he spent two tours in Vietnam, retiring in September 1972 as a commissioned warrant officer (W-3).



JOE TYSON

whose father served in the Merchant Marine in World War One, enlisted in the Merchant Marine in August 1942. Since German submarines were sinking merchant ships faster than they could be constructed, he received his training and Seaman's license and went home to await orders to a ship. On returning home, he discovered that his father had also enlisted for his second war. Needless to say, Tyson's mother vigorously opposed the idea that father and son might sail on the same ship. Tyson sailed first on a tug and barge rig out of Houston then on the freighter COASTWISE ALPHA. His third job was aboard the ocean going liberty ship CAPE JUBY at which time he became an able-bodied seaman. In 1944, Joe twice survived the sinking of ships that struck mines in the North Irish Sea while carrying aviation fuel to England. Each time there was a tremendous explosion but no fire. He was rescued from the icy water by Royal Navy PT Boats after a short time in life rafts and then returned to the United States to sail on yet another ship. He signed on to the aviation gasoline tanker CAPE DEFIANCE, serving as purser and pharmacist mate. He visited ports of call on almost all continents. These tankers typically had crews of forty-seven seamen and officers, nineteen Navy armed guard crews, and two to four cargo specialists. Armament was initially a wooden five-inch gun, later replaced by the real thing, plus two anti-aircraft guns, two fifty-caliber machine guns, a pistol and a rifle — hardly a match for an aircraft, submarine or warship.



Photo Not Available



Photo Not Available

FOY W. WATSON

was born in October 1926 in Waco. He enlisted in the Navy in August 1944, attending boot camp in San Diego. From there he was assigned to the heavy cruiser USS TUSCALOOSA (CA-37). The TUSCALOOSA joined the 3rd Fleet at Ulithi Atoll in January 1945 and participated in the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Watson was a bugler in the TUSCALOOSA band and was on the bridge when the flag was raised on Mount Suribachi. After Okinawa, the TUSCALOOSA went to the Phillipines where she was hit by a shore battery. Watson suffered shrapnel wounds. In November 1945, they picked up American troops in Shanghai and sailed for Hawaii as part of "Operation Magic Carpet." They arrived in San Francisco in January 1946. Watson transferred to the Naval Hospital in San Francisco as a result of hearing loss from firing the eight-inch guns at Okinawa. In March he was discharged from the Navy as a bugler, first class, with the Purple Heart, eight ribbons and two battle stars.

JACK WRIGHT

volunteered for the Navy in November 1941 under the V-7 program, which allowed him to finish college at Southwest Texas at the end of 1942. He was called to active duty in February 1943 and attended midshipman's school at Columbia University. Wright was assigned to anti-aircraft gunnery school and later as a gunnery officer on the light cruiser USS MILWAUKEE (CL-5.) After patrols in the South Atlantic, they cruised to Murmansk, Russia in April 1944 where, after training a Soviet crew, the ship was transferred to the Soviet Union's Northern Fleet under Lend-Lease. Wright returned to Scotland and reported to the former merchant ship USS PRESIDENT WARFIELD (IX-169) as the gunnery officer. In June 1944, their assignment was to take troops off the beach if no beachhead was secured during the Normandy landings. After the successful landings, the ship was left at Omaha Beach as a headquarters ship. Wright returned to the states and was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS ANTIETAM (CV-36) as a gunnery officer. ANTIETAM was transferred to the Pacific as the war ended. Wright earned 14 ribbons and three battle stars, all in the European and African campaigns. He remained in the Navy Reserve until 1959 and was discharged as a lieutenant.



Thank you all – for your service to our country!