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Tree planted to honor veterans of USS Talladega

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TALLADEGA COUNTY — Some 62 veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam braved cold, rainy weather Wednesday morning to help plant a tree on the courthouse lawn in honor of their service aboard the USS Talladega, an attack transport named for the county.

Those who served aboard the Talladega, sometimes referred to as the Tremblin' T due to a bent propeller

that was never repaired properly, hold reunions in various parts of the country each year. The group held its first reunion in Talladega in 2002, when a monument to their service and the craft they served on was placed on the square as well.

Since then, 25 of the reunion regulars have passed away, according to a member that was present Wednesday.

Awarded a total of seven Battle Stars, the Talladega was involved in the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa in World War II, the occupation of Japan and in the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts as well.

World War II veteran Mort Block said, "I think probably the proudest thing would be the fact that four of the men in the Joe Rosenthal photograph of the flag being raised on Mt. Suribachi got to Iwo Jima aboard the Talladega. It's really important, too, that younger people in town can come down here and see this monument and learn about their history."

Club president Gerry Seymore said the Talladega also played another major role in the war in the Pacific. "We cruised past the ship in Tokyo Harbor as the treaty was being signed," he said. "Then we delivered the first American ground troops to actually occupy Japan after the war ended."

"We're really glad to be back in Talladega again," Block added, although this year they were only in town for a few hours. The remainder of the reunion will be in Atlanta.

The plaque placed in front of the tree reads simply "The Tremblin' T Tree: In honor of the Crew of the USS Talladega, by the grateful citizens of Talladega

County.”

The tree was actually in the ground already when the veterans arrived, but most took turns putting a shovel full of dirt into the hole.

Turning back to old habits, perhaps, one refused. When asked if he was going to pick up a shovel, he said, “I’ll leave the shoveling for the Seabees,” he replied. “My job is just to get them here.”

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