ZEPHYRHILLS MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY

January 2023

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ZMMH NEWS

President's Comments by Cliff Moffett

Inside this issue:

President's Comments	1
Events	2
Calendar	2
2nd Ranger Battalion	3
Legacy Brick Program	3
Odds and Ends	4
Community Partners	4

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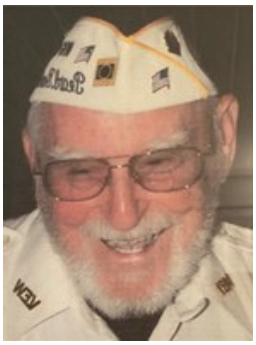
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My comments are led by incredibly sad news. Mr. Cecil F. Wigmore passed away September 10, 2022. Known to his friends as "Wig" he was 102 years old and the last known Pearl Harbor survivor to reside in this area. Wig was awarded the bronze Star for meritorious service. Wig made numerous visits to the museum and particularly enjoyed sharing experiences with visitors. Wig, a true hero, is and always will be, missed by those that knew him. RIP Wig. Slow salute.



As many know, the museum had advertised the Zephyrhills Battle for Veterans event scheduled to take place over the Veterans Day weekend. However, hurricane Nicole quickly destroyed this nine-month planned event. Planners for this event required two days for logistics support and site preparation of the field. Because of rain saturated grounds, had we tried to hold the event after the hurricane passed, safety of personnel and equipment would have been compromised. So the most difficult decision we ever had to make was to cancel the event. We tried diligently to get the word out through social media, emails to supporters, vendors and newspaper announcements. We apologize profusely to those that made the trip only to find the event cancelled. The event is rescheduled for November 10, 11, and 12, 2023.

Yours truly participated in the Veterans Day parade in downtown Zephyrhills. Riding along with me was William "Bill" Flynn, a two-time Purple Heart and Bronze Star recipient from the Vietnam war. Bill, as so many, had never been recognized for his service, so this was the perfect opportunity to show Bill that America does care about its heroes.



ZMMH NEWS

Events

Every year your museum staff recognizes that infamous day, December 7, 1941. This year was no different. The weather was perfect for this **Pearl Harbor Day** event, and the turnout, although smaller than in the past, was enough to be able to pay extra attention to visitors. The day began with a skydiver from Skydive City parachuting into the event with a huge American flag. The Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the National Anthem was accomplished by Rod Rehrig, Commandant of the local U.S. Marine Corps League.



A Pearl Harbor Day Visitor

President Moffett was surprised when the museum was presented with a Patriotic Service Award for "...outstanding service to the nation and their families" from the Association of the United States Army.



The presentation was made by Marilyn Westroop, the Public Relations Officer for the Suncoast Chapter.

Save the Date! March 25, 2023, is our annual **Vietnam Remembrance day**.

The event is free from 10 AM to 4 PM and is explicitly held to honor those that served during that era and those that gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Visitors can expect to see various military armor, vehicles, aircraft and memorabilia on display.

As of this writing, details are still being worked out with the hopes of securing a Huey helicopter. Keep watching our website and Facebook group page for further developments.

Museum Calendar

January 2023

Jan 5 — Board Meeting—11:00 AM
Jan 7 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Jan 14 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Jan 21 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Jan 28 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

February 2023

Feb 2 — Board Meeting — 11:00 AM
Feb 4 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Feb 11 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Feb 18 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Feb 25 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

March 2023

Mar 2 — Board Meeting—11:00 AM
Mar 4 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Mar 11 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Mar 18 — Open 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Mar 25 — Vietnam Remembrance Day 10 AM - 4 PM

2nd Ranger Battalion

Did you know that four Rangers once captured 850 Germans?

The city of Brest in western France was an important German stronghold protected by a battery of four massive, 280 mm coastal guns which in turn was surrounded by pillboxes, sniper positions and minefields. First Lieutenant Robert T. Edlin of the 2nd Ranger Battalion and three of his men were sent on recon patrol to the outskirts of the battery on the morning of September 9, 1944. Their job was to get an idea of the layout of defenses, but one of the men noticed a path through the minefield and started running down it at full tilt, followed by the others.

The four men surprised a pillbox with 20 German paratroopers inside and captured it without firing a shot.

Three of the men forced an English-speaking German officer to lead them to the commandant's office.

They moved through the massive fort's defenses as German soldiers looked on in disbelief. Inside, the Commandant thought the Rangers were bluffing and refused to surrender at first. Edlin pulled the pin from a hand grenade and pressed the grenade against the colonel's chest, counting "One..two…". The colonel surrendered before three.

He broadcast a surrender order on the loudspeakers to the garrison. By this time, the rest of the 2nd Ranger Battalion were at the outer defenses.

Able Company patrol captured 850 German prisoners and negated the threat from the strongest and largest fortress around Brest and triggered the fall of Brest.

The "Fabulous Four"



1Lt Robert T. Edlin, SSG William Dreher, SSG William Courtney, SSG Warren Buirmaste

(Excerpts from Beyond the Beach by Robert W. Jones, Jr.)

Legacy Brick Program

Cliff Moffett
U.S. Navy
1983—1992

Our visitors continue to show a vast interest in our very successful Legacy Brick Program. It is an ideal way to permanently memorialize parents, relatives, or friends. These personalized bricks are featured at the museum flagpole. Applications are available at the museum or may be downloaded from our website at www.zmmh.org.



ZMMH NEWS

ODDS AND ENDS

Your Museum

Constructed as part of a group of state projects, a major airfield expansion began in 1941 when it became home to U.S. Army Air Corps training facilities in preparation for WWII. It was in full operation by 1943, providing advanced fighter pilot training for aircrews destined for service in Europe.

After the war, Zephyrhills Army Airfield was transferred to civilian municipal service, including residences, a school, medical offices, and Civil Air Patrol headquarters,

Our museum is the last of approximately 30 local wartime barracks structures.

We are grateful to the city of Zephyrhills that provides upkeep to this facility and grounds. With no overhead or paid positions to contend with, all monetary donations are immediately re-invested into the educational displays.

Red Tape Is Still Present In Some Of The Departments

Although the modern army is streamlined in many respects, "red tape", as we call it, is very difficult to get away from. For illustration, let's propose you are attempting to salvage a pair of G I socks.

After "sweating out" a long line of men with the same idea in mind, you finally get to the supply sergeant, who, after taking your name, rank, serial number, age last birthday, age next birthday, your mother's maiden name, your father's place of birth, and almost every other personal fact about you except what you had for breakfast, finally examines the socks and directs you to the Supply Officer, since he thinks the socks are still usable and you argue they are not.

Quite likely the Supply Officer-will review your sad case, very solemnly; tell you how much it costs your "Uncle" to keep you, and that soldiers should learn to take better care of their equipment. (The latter will absorb about 20 minutes, and you were supposed to be at work about half an hour ago). Then, if you are so unfortunate as to have him O.K. your salvage, you will again "sweat out" the line until you get to the supply sergeant, who, with huge tears streaming down his cheeks, will hand you a pair of socks for you old ones.

Should the Supply Officer fail to O.K. your salvage, you are confronted with two alternatives. You may present you case to the First Sergeant, who will in turn will refer you to the C.O; or you can go buy yourself a new pair. (You will find the latter alternative is by far the easier).

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Community Partners