

AMPHIBIAN

Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla.



News Spots

Honor Flight selects Lanark Village WWII veteran

Mr. Robert "Bob" Franklin of Lanark Village, along with 80 other WWII Vets, was chosen for a one day round trip to visit the WWII Memorial in Washington D.C.

Bob is the third WWII CGJA member to be selected for this honor. The other two are Mr. Arthur Minichiello, Revere, MA and Mr. Walter Mallet, Tampa, FL.

Through the end of 2012 the Honor Flight Network has transported more than 98,500 WWII veterans to Washington, D.C. to see their memorial.. The program presently has 121 hubs in 41 states. Due to the senior age of these WWII veterans, and the prediction that we are losing approximately 800 of them daily, they are committed to do all within their power to make a WWII veteran's dream a reality. The current focus will remain on World War II veterans and those veterans from any war who have a terminal illness. However, the vision goes beyond World War II.

In the future, Honor Flight Network will also pay tribute to America's other heroes who served during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, followed by veterans of more current wars. They, too, have given so much and it's time we show them that their efforts are not forgotten. Honor Flight Network has learned a lot over these last four years and one point that stands out is that our veteran heroes aren't asking for recognition. It is our position that they deserve it. Our program is just a small token of our appreciation for those that gave so much.

The group of veterans left from the Tallahassee Regional Airport early on May 11th and returned that evening the same day. Due to the advanced age and medical condition of many of these veterans they were accompanied by a volunteer assistant, These volunteer assistants paid for their own airfare. Bob's son, Kenneth, who is also a veteran (Viet Nam) accompanied his father on the trip.

The 19th Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Days

The Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Days reunion was established to celebrate the historic Carrabelle wartime museum and the service of veterans, from WWII and beyond. The schedule for 2014 has been announced—veterans and their families are invited to join us in Carrabelle from Friday, March 7, 2014 through Saturday, March 8th, 2014.

On the evening of the 7th, the Camp Gordon Johnston Post 82, American Legion in Lanark Village, will host a Low Country Boil for all WWII veterans, active duty troops, American Legion members and their guests. Live music will add to the evening festivities. All veterans are encouraged to attend this event.

On Saturday, March 8th, all participants are invited to begin the day with breakfast at the Masonic Lodge in Carrabelle, located on NE 1st street. Breakfast will be served starting at 0700 hours and will be free to active duty troops and WWII veterans. All others will pay \$7.00 at the door.

At approximately 10 A.M., a large parade celebration will again be held on Highway 98 in Carrabelle, and will feature WWII vehicles, tanks and modern military equipment. Civic groups and re-enactors will also participate in the parade festivities. The public is cordially invited to attend and watch the parade, paying special tribute to veterans in all branches of service and from all wartime and peacetime efforts.

A highlight of the weekend will be Saturday evening's dinner dance which, for a nominal fee, will include a meal, non-alcohol drink and DJ dance with local guest entertainers. Cost and location to be announced. The public is invited to attend this event and can also sponsor a dinner for a soldier. Tickets will be available prior to the event. For information and tickets, please contact Greg Kristofferson at: 850 320-8201.

The CGJ museum will be open for visitors on Friday, March 7th until 5 P.M., but closed Saturday morning, March 8th so that all may join in the parade activities. It will reopen to the public Saturday afternoon. The Museum is closed on Sundays.

News of celebration events, as well as prices for dinners and breakfasts will be updated regularly on the museum webpage at: www.campgordonjohnston.com.



Monthly Movies

Each film is intended to correspond to the actual month in which the event occurred.

January: The documentary “the Drive to the Ardennes,” was produced by CGJ Member, Mr. John Gaffey, and will feature the valiant effort of the out numbered 28th which slowed the advances of the Panzer Divisions speeding towards the village, Bastogne, a key objective of the Germans in their “last gasp” attempt to drive a wedge into the allied forces and recapture the initiative on the western front. This film will be shown in the Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum movie theatre, January 25th, at 10:30 A.M.

The 28th Infantry Division trained at Camp Gordon Johnston and bore the brunt of the opening drive of what was known as the “Battle of the Bulge.”



February: The film “Flags Of Our Fathers,” directed by Clint Eastwood, will be shown Saturday, February 28th at 10:15 A.M. The plot focuses on seven United States Marines of the 28th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division – Sgt. Mike Strank, Pfc. Rene Gagnon, Pfc. Ira Hayes, Cpl. Harlon Block, Pfc. Franklin Sousley, Sgt. Hank Hansen, and Pfc. Ralph Ignatowski – as well as their Navy Corpsman, PhM2. John “Doc” Bradley.

Clint Eastwood was 14 when the Battle of Iwo Jima took place in 1945, old enough to know how Joe Rosenthal’s famous picture vouched for victory with the raising of the second flag atop Mt. Surabachi.

This battle commenced on February 19, 1945 and was one of the costliest of the Pacific Campaign. Due to the graphic scenes of violence shown in this film, absolutely no one under the age of eighteen will be allowed to view this film.

Perhaps this film best demonstrates what our Army, Navy, and Marine veterans faced while in combat in the Pacific. This film will last a little over two hours and free popcorn will be provided. While there is no admission fee, please remember that the museum operates on donations, and donations are welcome.

There will be one showing beginning at 10:30. Free popcorn will be available. Admission at the museum is, as always, by donation.

For dates of future films showing at the museum, check the CGJ webpage.



The 3rd Annual “Salute to Veterans” Golf Tournament

In November we held the 3rd annual “Salute to Veterans” Golf tournament. This two- day event has been an ongoing partnership with the St. Joseph Bay Golf Club and has allowed us to network into the Gulf County area.

The event began a “Silent Auction” on Friday the 8th at the St. Joseph Bay Country Club in Port St. Joe, Florida. The Boyer Band donated live entertainment for dancing and hors d’oeuvres with drinks were provided by the Club.

The Tournament kicked off on Saturday, after the presentation of the colors by the Port St. Joe High School Jr. Naval ROTC followed by the invocation and remarks by CGJA President Tony Minichiello.



Expanded Viet Nam Exhibit

The Viet Nam era exhibit has been expanded to include new displays donated by the Viet Nam era veterans. While not diluting the “purity” of our WWII history mission, it has become difficult to not recognize our newest and most ardent veteran members. The assistance and support these Viet Nam era vets have shown towards our efforts, has helped make the CGJA WWII Museum one of the featured attractions of Franklin County, Florida. We also have displays for the “Spanish American War, WWI, the Korean conflict and the current Middle East veterans.

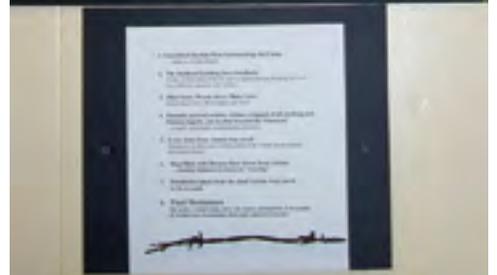
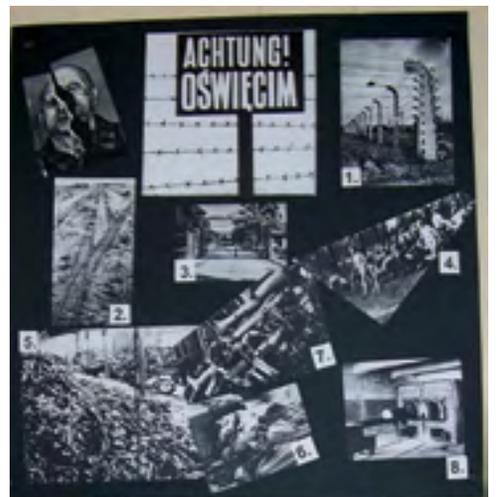
Solitary Strip of Barbed Wire Donated

A solitary strip of barbed wire reportedly taken from the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp in Poland was recently donated by a visitor to the Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum.

Although unable to verify its authenticity, it is the type used by Germany during WWII. It also appears to be old enough to be from that period. The donated strip of wire originally was given to the visitor by a student who traveled to Auschwitz on a trip to Poland.

As a reminder of that dark period in World History, a special display has been set up by the museum in memory of the millions of Jews and other minorities who were exterminated by Nazi Germany before and during the war.

The CGJ WWII Museum Library has a number of books and articles from Poland that were donated over the years and documents the death and labor camps run by the Nazis before and during WWII. The books from Poland are printed in Polish.



CGJ African-American DUKW truck battalions at Iwo Jima

(Assisting Marines during D-Day at the invasion of Iwo Jima drew the praise of their officers as well as the grateful Marines)

The 43rd Amphibious truck battalion was constituted on 30 June 1944 and activated as an African American battalion on 5 July 1944 at Camp Gordon Johnston, Florida. The 43rd had three Amphibious Truck Companies, the 471st, 473rd and 476th. After training and shipping out to the Pacific Theatre, the 471st was attached to the 5th Marine Division, the 476th to the 4th Marine Division and the 473rd was attached to the Corps Artillery and Anti Aircraft Artillery for the scheduled 19 February 1945 Amphibious landings.

The 471st and 476th hauled ammunition and division artillery right behind the initial assault waves and then returned for more ammunition under a hail of enemy fire. The 473rd did not bring in the Corps Artillery until early morning the next day. The companies lost several DUKW's to enemy fire and continued to return to the ships to pick up and deliver critical supplies. The HHD, 43rd Amphibious Truck Battalion arrived at the invasion and assumed control, from the Marines, over the three truck companies.

For their performance during the invasion, the three companies were awarded the Navy Unit Commendation Medal. As a testament to their bravery, the 476th had 5 soldiers receive the Silver Star and 17 earned Bronze Star medals. The 473rd had three soldiers earn the Silver Star. There is no list as to how many valor medals were awarded to the 471st.

The current 332nd TC BN, Tampa, Florida traces its lineage and honors back to the 43rd. The 332nd has attended Camp Gordon Johnston Days in past years bringing its LCU 2000 for display on Marine Street.

Information for this article was derived from the Original Camp Newspapers "The Amphibian" March 31st and April 21st 1945 issues as well as the TC-Regt-Association Magazine in the Hall of Fame section 2011. Special thanks also to Colonel Charles Aucoin, USAR (Ret).

Boy Scout Troop 370 from Atlanta Georgia visits Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum

On Saturday, January 18th, 2014, 46 members of Troop 370 stopped in at the Museum for an hour-long tour. Many of the young men were keenly aware of America's role in WWII. One young man, John Walsh, was especially interested in the Asian theatre while others kept the tour guide inundated with all sorts of questions.

The troop leaders were, themselves, fascinated with the exhibits, short films and artifacts on display. Both Scouts and Troop Leaders were amazed to learn the stories and history behind the exhibits.

Ms. Margaritte Jackson of Marietta, Georgia, who also has a place on Dog Island, directed the Scouts to the Museum. The Boy Scouts were in the area to camp on Dog Island over the weekend.



New to Our Staff

A new staff member joined our team since the last Camp Gordon Johnston Days—Mrs. Merle Brannan. She was placed here by the Work Force Program, and she is a real asset to the museum. She is a local resident whose husband, Parmalee Brannan, was in World War II; he is pictured on our wall in the hall.

Miss Merle, as she is often called, is from a well known local family. Her sister Audrey, now deceased, was married to Curly Messer. Most of you know Curley who came here with the 38th Division. He married Audrey and they settled in Carrabelle after the war. He is presently our Mayor.

Miss Merle's oldest sister, now deceased, was Julia Mae. She was also married to a World War II veteran, later famous for having one of the best restaurants in the County, named in honor of his wife. People used to fly in on their private planes to eat at Julia Mae's. There was no better seafood anywhere.

In addition to her family, Merle is accomplished in her own right. She has many talents, but is best known for her pie making skills. She makes the best coconut cream pie you have ever eaten! Another local favorite is her lemon pie. She uses lemons grown in her own yard, making them extra fresh and tasty. She also makes chocolate and chocolate-peanut butter pies. 2 Al's still sells her pies, so be sure to get a piece while you are here for CGJ Days.

We feel very lucky to have Merle Brannan as part of our staff. She looks forward to meeting all of you in March!

The Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum is funded in part by the Franklin County Tourist Development Council, and houses over 10,000 square feet of artifacts, photos, displays, vehicles and stories—such as the featured article on this page—preserving the history of America's Greatest generation. Visit us online at www.campgordonjohnston.com. Like us on facebook.

A Letter from the President...

The year 2013 brought some new developments to the Museum;

First of all, we had 3976 visitors come to the museum, despite our “off-road” location. This represented our best year ever. Most of the visitors were from outside of our zip code. Many were tourists staying in Franklin or Gulf Counties. Others came specifically to see the museum’s many displays and artifacts

As we prepare for 2014, our task will be to continue promoting our Museum, telling the story of WWII and the efforts that the American people put into that war. History, they say, is written by the victors and to a large part that is true. Also true is that if you forget your history you will be bound to repeat it. Our mission then, is to make certain our visitors leave with a better understanding and knowledge of America’s past than when they came through the front door.

I am happy to say that most of the younger boys and girls who come to the museum have a sense of history and appreciation for the American veteran.

On a final note, we recently signed a contract with Innovia Consulting of Tallahassee to handle all necessary arrangements for the environmental and highway permitting in preparation for a storage building on the property that we own on Hwy 98. This property is across from Carrabelle Beach where the D-day practice beach landings were held. Initially this building will serve as a maintenance and storage facility until we can turn it into our permanent Museum location.

Wishing you all a healthy and prosperous 2014!
Anthony (Tony) Minichiello,
President, CGJ



Coastal Art Tour Carrabelle to St James 2014

The Carrabelle Artists Association is presenting its Annual Coastal Art Tour in conjunction with Camp Gordon Johnston Days. Various art exhibits and demonstrations will be presented at participating galleries, studios, and shops on Saturday, March 8th.

On Friday evening, March 7th a reception will be held at the Rio Carrabelle where maps may be obtained.

From Carrabelle Beach to St James, more than twenty artists at ten locations will be participating and demonstrating fine art, sculpture and pottery.

Maps and information are available at the Carrabelle Chamber of Commerce, Carrabelle City Hall, the Franklin County Senior Center and each participating location.

For information call Bill Owen at 850 653 6426 or email billowen@wildblue.net

www.campgordonjohnston.com

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