



AMPHIBIAN

Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla.



News Spots

Museum Update

November was a great month for the museum. Our three vehicles were in three Veterans Day parades, and the St. Joe Bay Golf Club, in Port St. Joe, Florida, hosted a fundraiser for the museum, as a salute to veterans.

The money raised by the golf tournament has allowed the museum to make purchases it normally could not afford. The Movie Theater Room was the big winner. We purchased a 70 inch TV, a Blue-ray player (that also plays DVDs), and a popcorn machine. Once a month we plan to show a special movie or documentary about WWII. In December we showed *Remembering the Ardennes*, a documentary made by our own member, John Gaffey. Since December 16 was Battle of the Bulge Day, this was a perfect time to show this magnificent video with most of the story being told by the veterans who fought there. We served popcorn from our new machine and bottled water. We had a great turn-out, and everyone agreed that Mr. Gaffey had done a tremendous job with this production.

The golf tournament also provided enough funds to build a new display case. This will enable us to display some of the weapons we now have in storage.

In addition, The Apalachicola Chamber of Commerce donated another display case being used for a new medical display. The new display has been dedicated to Mary Britz, a WWII veteran who was a member of the Navy Nurse Corps, as a tribute for her ten years of volunteer service to the museum.

The museum continues to grow. More and more items are being donated, and more and more visitors are coming to view them. With your continued support, the men and women of WWII and their contributions to this great nation will not be forgotten.

The 17th Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Reunion Days

The annual Camp Gordon Johnston Reunion Days were established to celebrate historic wartime Carrabelle and the service of our veterans from WWII to present. The Camp Gordon Johnston Association has announced the 2012 schedule. All veterans and their family, friends, and supporters are invited to Carrabelle from Thursday, March 8, 2012 through Saturday, March 10, 2012.

Veterans and their families can register throughout the day on **Friday, March 9**, at the CGJ WWII Museum located at 1001 Grey Avenue, in the Carrabelle Municipal Complex. Finger foods, beverages, and treats will be provided to our guests. That evening at 6 P.M., a southern seafood buffet will be hosted by the Lanark American Legion Post 82, Camp Gordon Johnston. WWII veterans and active duty troops are especially invited to attend this event, where they will be served first. Live music will add to the evening festivities.

On **Saturday, March 10**, all participants are invited to begin the day with breakfast at the Masonic Lodge, 108 NE First Street, in Carrabelle. Breakfast will be served at 7:30 A.M. and the cost is \$6.00. Breakfast is *free* to active duty troops and WWII veterans.

At approximately 10:45 A.M., on Highway 98 in Carrabelle, a large parade celebration will again be held featuring WWII vehicles, tanks, and modern military equipment. Marching bands, active duty soldiers, civic groups, and re-enactors will participate in the parade festivities. The public is cordially invited to attend this parade paying tribute to veterans of all branches of service, from all past and current wartime and peacetime efforts. If you wish to register on-line to be in the parade, go to http://www.campgordonjohnston.com/parade_form.htm.

On **Saturday afternoon**, a re-enactment of the Normandy beach landing is also being tentatively planned for and will be held at the Carrabelle Beach Park, west of Carrabelle on Highway 98, near the Crooked River Lighthouse. *We'll keep you posted!*

Saturday evening features a dinner and dance at the Carrabelle Municipal Complex auditorium, where prizes and awards will be given. Live dance music will be provided. The meal will be your choice of either seafood or chicken at a cost of \$17.00. The public is invited to attend this event and sponsor dinner for a soldier. *All active duty and WWII veterans eat free.*

The CGJ museum will be open for visitors on Friday, March 9th until 5 P.M., but closed Saturday morning, March 10 so that all may join in the parade activities. It will reopen to the public Saturday afternoon. The Museum is closed Sundays.

News of celebration events will be updated regularly on the museum website, www.campgordonjohnston.com.



Taps

Louis Prunier,
91, Oxford, MA

Louis was Cadre
Personnel at CJG
from 1943-46

Louis passed away
on November
4, 2011. That
date was he and

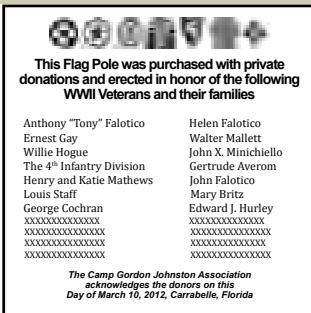
his wife Olive's 68th wedding anniversary. During his tour at the camp Olive lived in Tallahassee and saw Louis on weekends. Louis was there to close the camp. Louis had previously donated all his Army memorabilia to the Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum. Olive has written that they both realized their hardship was no where near the sacrifice of the men on active duty overseas. The family is proud to have Louis as a part of the CGJ Museum.

Commemorative Flag-pole ordered

The CGJA has recently ordered a 30' white fiberglass flag-pole to replace the bent 20' temporary pole at the entrance to the museum. The flagpole was ordered from Flagpole Warehouse in Acworth, GA.

Upon arrival the inmates from Franklin Correctional Institution will install the pole into the foundation. There will be a dedication ceremony during the reunion with a bronze plaque placed at the base of the flagpole. Individuals who donated money for the purchase of the flagpole will have their names or names of their veteran relatives inscribed on the plaque. We advertised earlier for contributors, but will continue to accept donations through January 2012.

A sketch of the plaque is shown below. It will be bronze and will be raised at the base of the flag-pole. The size is currently 12"x12" and the type is from 48 pt. to 30 pt. in size. The final number of donors will determine the final size, however, the minimum size will be 12" x 12"



This Flag Pole was purchased with private donations and erected in honor of the following WWII Veterans and their families

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Anthony "Tony" Falotico | Helen Falotico |
| Ernest Gay | Walter Mallett |
| Willie Hogue | John X. Minichiello |
| The 4 th Infantry Division | Gertrude Averom |
| Henry and Katie Mathews | John Falotico |
| Louis Staff | Mary Britz |
| George Cochran | Edward J. Hurley |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
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| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |

The Camp Gordon Johnston Association acknowledges the donors on this Day of March 10, 2012, Carrabelle, Florida

Donations are \$100.00 minimum. Make check payable to CGJA and write "Memorial Flagpole Fund" on the memo line. You can also donate on-line at: www.campgordonjohnston.com.

Be sure to name the relative, or yourself, to be named on the plaque.

Dog-tag owner found

The CGJA held a golf tournament to benefit the museum at the St. Joseph Golf Club on November 19th, 2011. The museum has hundreds of lost dog tags and the curators thought it would be a great novelty to place one, along with other items, into each "welcome bag" for the golfers. Bobby, retired from the Navy, was fascinated that he was holding a piece of history actually issued to a soldier. The following e-mail messages were sent to Mary Kelly, the administrative secretary to the Board of Directors for the St. Joseph Golf Club in Port St. Joe, Florida:

Hi Mary! You asked me to email this little story so here goes - At the Camp Gordon Johnson Golf Tournament, each of the players were given their "welcome bag" of treats. Each contained a dog tag that had been found around the grounds of the old camp. Anyway, Bobby's dog tag was for a gentleman named Orland Wallenberg. We were just going to put the tag in our shadow box of small treasures and then we wondered if he was still around. I checked for his name on Google, went to the White Pages and found that somebody with that name was living in Sioux Falls, S.D. A quick 411 call and I was talking with "Wally" Wallenberg who is 88 years young and was really happy to hear about his missing dog tag. He was at Camp Gordon Johnston for one winter training on those "ducks" for the planned landing. He remembered going into Tallahassee with "my 45 on my hip." He was sent to Europe, aboard the Queen Mary no less, and landed there on D-Day so he missed the battle. Don't think he minded that. His outfit was then trained to head for the Pacific and the war ended before he was shipped out. At any rate, he was thrilled when I told him we had his dog tag and we have sent it on to him. Have not heard back from him as yet, but hope I do. I wonder how many others are still around?

Hugs, Shirley

Mary, the following is a copy of the letter we received from "Wally" yesterday:

Dear Shirley and Elvis,

First a big thank you for your endeavors in my lost dog tag. Now a big apology for taking so long to answer. Things have been hectic around here because of the season.

You folks really went the extra mile, in locating me and then sending the tag. Again thank you. After all those years, it is still in pretty good shape.

I remember the name Carrabelle and also Apalachicola. Some of the troop lived there with their wives. The folder is special because I did not have anything to remind me of Camp Gordon Johnston. I remember the floors in the barracks were sand. We had a wooden platform between bunks to stand on.

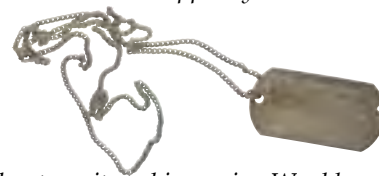
I found St. Joe on the map so I can see where you are located. It would appear you have a lovely view around you.

Again, thank for your very special gift. God Bless Lily and "Wally" Wallenberg

P.S. Feel free to write again.

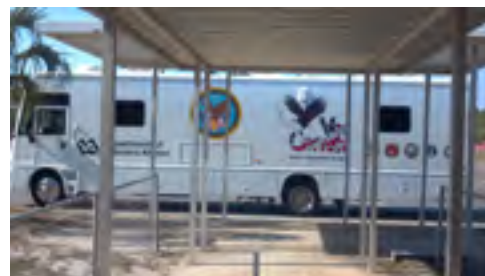
Mary, I thought you might be interested in this too. I plan to write to him again. Would like to go up to the camp and take some pictures.

Love, Shirley



Mobile Vet Center comes to CGJ Museum

On December 17th, The Mobile Vet Center visited the museum during the showing of the Documentary *The Ardennes*. The Vet center used this opportunity to meet with area veterans who needed counseling on matters concerning their benefits or assistance they were seeking through the Veterans Administration. The counselors were able to help eight veterans. The purpose of the mobile unit is to bring the VA closer to veterans and to make them aware of the benefits they are eligible for.



Amphibian Engineers in Action

Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area...

...Early on the morning of October 11 a Jap force in landing barges attempted a surprise landing on our own beach, Scarlet Beach. Later reports indicated that ten Jap barges started out for this attack, but only four approached Scarlet Beach. Taking advantage of a very dark night and a quiet sea, the Jap boatmen (learned later from a prisoner) let their ramps almost down when 600 yards off the beach, cut their motors, and quietly paddled their boats in for the landing. Fortunately, the keen eyes of one of our sergeants detected the strange craft when still 200 yards out. He immediately opened up with his 37-mm gun, soon followed by the Aussie Bofors which, however, had difficulty depressing enough to hit the barges. One Jap barge foundered, the survivors jumping to the other barges.

However, the heroes of the occasion were two shore engineers manning a .50-caliber machine gun opposite the point which the Japs selected for their landing. Waiting until they could see that the ramps were lowered so that armor plate would not deflect its fire, the gun opened a murderous fire at 25 yards. Many Japs were killed in the boats, but others jumped overboard and closed on the gun with hand grenades. Orders were issued to abandon the exposed gun and withdraw to a line the Aussies and our shore engineers were forming 100 yards back from the beach. The gun crew did not heed these orders but continued the battle, two against probably a hundred. With grenades hitting around them, they managed to load a second belt, and, although both were wounded by this time, continued the struggle. More and more Japs fell before their gun, some only 10 feet away. A grenade finally blew the gunner's leg off, and later he was found dead with his finger still on the trigger and the last round in the second belt fired. His assistant, disabled by his wounds, managed to grab a rifle and fire it into the heart of a Jap coming over him with a bayonet. The dead Jap fell across him and was still there when help arrived and the shore engineer regained consciousness. This gun crew had, almost alone, defeated the Jap landing. Even at that, things might not have been so good on Scarlet Beach that night if all ten barges had landed.

Twelve miles off Finschhafen lay the Tami Islands, suspected of being occupied by the Japs. On October 3 a boat force of 14 LCVP's and 2 LCM's landed an Aussie company through the encircling coral reefs. Instead of the hot fire expected, natives in outrigger canoes joyfully greeted the white man once more.

Japs had occupied their islands for many, many moons, and had departed only a half a moon ago. The well-constructed pillboxes covering the only landing beach clearly indicated that an earlier landing would have a met hot resistance.

With Finschhafen in Allied hands, our 532nd Regiment assembled in Dreger and Finsch Harbors, obtaining protected anchorages for

their boats for the first time since the Scarlet Beach landing. As the mission of the Australian Division was now to push north in the direction of Sio. All of the 532nd was brought up to the Finsch area to support this operation. The coast from Finschhafen to Sio was much different from that previously encountered. Here there were very few beaches, and they were always small and often rocky. Between these few beaches were shores as rocky and rough as our rock-bound Maine. Once around Huon Peninsula seas were also much rougher. However, our boatmen, always eager to meet new difficulties, tackled the new situation with determination.

After a lull in our work while the Aussies were overcoming stubborn Jap marines on the heights of Satelberg, the nightly resupply missions started to keep troops, ammunition, and supplies rolling to the Aussies as they pushed northward. There was not the glory or excitement of an initial landing to keep everyone keyed up. Rather, it was stubborn determination to get the goods through that kept the men going. The shore Engineers were themselves out developing new beach areas, one after another, as the advances progressed. Our beach reconnaissance parties and initial openings of new beaches were so close to the retreating Japs that our boats were often under fire. Fortunately, the Japs' fire had not increased in accuracy, and these boatmen got off as lightly as in the earlier Nassau Bay-Salamaua operation. Our losses to storm and surf were heavier, but these risks had to be run. The Aussies must be and were supplied their tea and bully beef, their artillery and ammunition, and their tanks used initially at Satelberg

Here our support battery assisted the Aussies by firing barrages of the new American rocket for the first time in the Southwest Pacific. The Japs indicated little love for these rockets. Startled by this new type of weapon, their artillery opened up for the first time in wild firing against this new enemy, but, as they could not tell from where the rockets were coming, their fire had no effect except to disclose their positions to the eager and accurate Aussie 25 pounders. After the barrage, Aussie Infantry rushed the shelled area but found no live Japs to oppose them.

On December 15 we had our first participation with American troops, in a landing at Arawe, the first on New Britain. Here we furnished 16 LCVP's and 2 LCM's, carried on an APA from the Near Shore to the rendezvous area 4 miles off Arawe. An hour was to be allowed for the unloading of 660 passengers and equipment from the APA. Actually this was completed, after only one rehearsal on the Near Shore, in the rapid time of 18 minutes. As reefs were particularly bad here, only "alligators" and "buffaloes" (sea going tanks) comprised the first four waves. By the time our landing boats came in the 5th wave, our scouts ashore had found openings to get to the narrow beach. However, one LCVP did get hung up on a coral and, before the boat could be refloated, Jap strafers came in and filled it full of holes. After the initial landing, more of our LCM's arrived with the Navy LCT's and remained on the Far Shore when the Navy large craft returned to the Near Shore.

This article will be continued in the next issue.

Letter from the President

We have had a fairly successful year in 2011. In spite of a weak economy, the CGJA has managed to raise enough funds to purchase a new 70 inch wide-screen T.V. for our movie theatre, a new flag pole for the museum entrance, service our vehicles, upgrade our exhibits, expand the gift shop and, finally, begin planning the first phase of a memorial park on the property on Highway 98.

Museums are a difficult venture under any economic circumstance, even those operating with extensive government funding. Just weathering and surviving in today's economic climate is an accomplishment. With your continued support we will be here insuring that our military history is being preserved and that its heritage is being protected.

See you in Carrabelle in March.

Matt Mathews
President, CGJA



While visiting colorful Carrabelle you are cordially invited to visit nearby **Camp Gordon Johnston American Legion Post 82** on Oak Street in the Lanark area just three miles away.

Open 7 days a week
(4-10 p.m. Mon-Fri, 3-10 p.m. weekends) this high-energy Post features a large contingent of Legionnaires as well as S.A.L. and Auxiliary membership. And, in keeping with tried and true tradition, your first drink is "on the house."

Be sure to bring a home **post license plate** to trade.



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AMPHIBIAN is the official newsletter of the Camp Gordon Johnston Association, Inc. (a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation) and is published twice annually for the benefit of our veterans, members and all interested parties. AMPHIBIAN welcomes editorial, technical and historical articles. send to: Editor, AMPHIBIAN, P.O. Box 1334, Carrabelle, FL 32322. AMPHIBIAN assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to material. Material may also be e-mailed through our web page at: www.campgordonjohnston.com



The following is an e-mail that was sent to CGJA board member, Tony Minichiello, who had asked the sender to recount his memories of his time at Camp Gordon Johnston:

Hi Tony, I enjoyed my stay there at Camp Gordon Johnston. I was with the 4th Infantry Division and we were there for Amphibious Training. We took night hikes through swamps with eyes glowing in the light of my flashlight (think alligators!). We had sand floors in the barracks, coal-burning potbelly stoves for heat (yes in Florida!). We would find lizards and scorpions in our shoes in the morning.

Part of our training consisted of jumping off a high dock and swimming to the next dock. I made it on my first attempt. They made you come back every day until you could. FUN!!! Bus trips to Tallahassee. We hit a wild pig one night—Florida pigs are tough enough to stop a 2-1/2 ton truck and dent its bumper.

We headed out into the bay on a stormy Thanksgiving Day in a landing craft expecting to land on the beach. Later, we lost one craft (all survived) and landed on Dog Island (wherever that is). Everyone was seasick, except for the coxswain and me. I think all my buddies would have killed us, if they could have, when the coxswain and I opened a can of pork and beans rations for a meal right there in front of them. The experience I had at Camp Gordon Johnston gives this 91-year-old fart a lot of great memories today.

We finally went back to Camp Gordon in Georgia and after acting as decoys for a couple of Armored Divisions, went to Fort Dix New Jersey and then on to England. (I could spend hours talking about the size of the waves in the North Atlantic in winter.) Troop ships and tankers were in the center of the convoy for protection, and the tankers were under water most of the time.

We landed in Liverpool and went to Devonshire. Once there we resumed training and landed on the English coast as if landing in France. We finally landed on Utah beach on D-day.

We were in the Ardennes area before and during the Battle of the Bulge, resting in an area across from St. Vith in Belgium. All was quiet. We transferred to Luxemburg and returned to retake the area we had previously held before the Germans attacked,

There, we found conditions that were utterly terrible; mess kits that still held food, typewriters loaded with paper never used—evidence that the poor guys who were there never knew what hit them. One group was new from the States and they apparently thought the area was secure enough to be a good place to get them acclimated to the terrain and rest before proceeding into Germany.

We had no air cover at first, because of heavily overcast skies and fog. Finally, we were able to regain our old positions and, with clearing skies, we were able to get supplies and defeat the Germans.

I clearly remember that it was the coldest I had ever been in my army career. The rest is, as they say, history!

It may sound as though we didn't like our stay at Camp Gordon Johnston, but this is not true. The hospitality of the locals, more than anything else, made up for the inconveniences.

Regards,
John Yaccarine, 4th Infantry Division WWII

John, the CGJA owes you and your generation a huge debt for your service. We thank you!

Potpourri

From Billy R. Posey

I was a paper boy for three years at the camp. Steve and Laura Simmons carried 13 boys to the camp every day except Saturday (no paper on Saturdays). Some of the delivery boys' names were; Wayne Davis, Milton Roberts, Hardy Taylor, Bobby Posey, and my twin brother Nolan Posey. I really enjoyed the time there. I got to know many good friends during that time.

