AMP SERVICE FORCES 7raining Center AMPHIBIAN

Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla.

Volume 20, Number Two

Amphibian

September, 2016

CGJ MUSEUM BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN

At the groundbreaking ceremony, representatives from state and local agencies, as well as, private entities were on hand to formally put the honorary "first shovel" in the ground. Two important absentee members honored with empty chairs were Mayor Wilburn "Curley" Messer and Michael Horvath. They were both instrumental in either relocating the museum when it needed more space or securing funding for construction of the new permanent building.









Photos courtesy of Manuel Gass, CGJA

From left to right:

Jay Bostwick, *Sperry Building Systems*. Cal Allen, *Carrabelle City Commission*. Molly Mitchell, *Inovia, LLC*. Anthony "Tony" Minichiello, *CGJA Building Committee*. Bill Montford, *Florida State Senator District 3*. William Massey, *Franklin County Commissioner, District 5*. Brenda LaPaz, *Carrabelle Mayor (and TDC member)*. Curt Blair, *Director, Franklin County TDC*. Capt. Chester Reese, Carrabelle, *(also TDC member)*, Brian Mimbs, Regional Director representing *U.S. Senator Marco Rubio*.

Smithsonian Museum Day 2016 Was the best ever!!

With the full participation of the Antique Automobile Clubs of America and Horseless Carriage Clubs from both Georgia and Tallahassee we as well as the Military Vehicle Preservation Association, 1st Florida Chapter coming to the event, visitation and participation hit an all time high. Over 150 visitors came to the Museum on a sunny/cloudy day and came away with a greater understanding of vehicle history both military and civilian.

Live music was provided by Harold Hollingshed on guitar and vocals with Chuck Billingsley on bass. They played country standards and old-time rock and roll. The combination bass and guitar fit in well with the occassion.

Ken La Paz from Hog Wild Bar-B-Que set up his mobile kitchen and served his signature barbecue dinners.

Finger food was provided to all visitors courtesy of the Museum.









All photos courtesy of Manuel Gass, CGJA

















All photos courtesy of Manuel Gass, CGJA

Friendship Force International British Exchange visits CGJ WWII Museum



On Tuesday September 6th, a group of 9 "Ambassadors" from England toured the Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum in Carrabelle. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Florida State University was the host organization, which set up the tour.

Visiting from September 1-8 the British Visitors were following the Florida British Heritage trail.

Arriving Thursday September 1st at Tallahassee Regional Airport, their tours included the Florida Capitol Complex as well as the Museum of Florida History, Governor's mansion and a host of dinner parties.

On September 3rd they toured Southern Georgia, visiting Pebble Hill Plantation, Thomasville and lunched at the Old Train Station.

On Monday the 5th, they toured Wakulla Springs. Tuesday was the Coastal Tour beginning with the Gulf Specimen Lab, FSU Marine Lab and The WWII Museum in Carrabelle. Afterward they toured Apalachicola and returned to Tallahassee.

They were scheduled to return to England on Thursday.

World War Two Veteran who worked at Camp Belle visits Museum WWII veteran John Gilbert came for a visit for the first time dur-



WWII veteran John Gilbert came for a visit for the first time during Smithsonian Museum Day. Mr.Gilbert worked at the boat repair facility at Camp Carrabelle I(also called "Camp Belle") located at the end of present day Marine street. Camp Belle was later re-named Camp Gordon Johnston. After the war John would return to Carrabelle for visits. He loved the area (one of the few who actually trained here that enjoyed their stay) and finally bought property, moving here after retiring. Mr. Gilbert, 98, was interviewed and video taped about his experiences at the camp by assistant curator Manny Gass. His videotaped interview will be placed in the research library along with many other WWII veteran interviews.



Harold D. Merrill (Sent by his family)

(May 17, 1923 - August 12, 2016)

Penfield: Friday, August 12, 2016 at age 93, while at his cottage in Connecticut. Predeceased by his wife, Marie; and son, Peter. Harold is survived by his daughter, Rosemary Merrill; son, David W. (Darlene) Merrill; grand-children, Peter (Linda) Merrill, Jenee (Joe) Pacheco, Danielle (Frank) DiMora and Zachary (Jessica) Merrill; and 5 great-grandchildren.

Harold was a proud WWII Army Veteran who served active duty in the Pacific Corridor.

The family would like to thank Dr. Thomas Penn, Dr. Brenda Baratta and staffat Jewish Senior Life Physician House Calls Program and Dr. Emelie Dumitrescu and staff at VA Outpatient Clinic for their compassionate care and assistance.

On SATURDAY, August 20th, please join the family at Holy Spirit Church, 1355 Hatch Rd., Penfield at 11 AM for his Funeral Mass. Interment White Haven Memorial Park. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be directed to:

The Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum, PO Box 1334, Carabelle, FL 32322 *or* Lollypop Farm, 99 Victor Rd., Fairport, NY 14450 in Harold's memory.

Arrangements by Profetta Funeral Chapel

Editor: The Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum is appreciative that that family of Mr. Merrill requested donations be sent to the Museum.

Mr. Merrill had never visited the museum due to health reasons but had always followed our progress on the internet. The Museum received over \$300.00

in his memory.

A common occurance: Confused about Camp Gordon and us

Subject: History Name: Jim Marriott

Email: the244th@gmail.com

Comments:

The 244th Field Artillery Battalion was stationed at Camp Gordon form 24 November 1943 to 13 June 1944. I am looking for digital copies of Camp Gordon's newspaper from that time. Also am looking for any information the Museum may have related to the 244th F.B. Battalion.

Thank you, Jim Marriott

Editor: The Museum has digital copies of ALL AMPHIBIAN newspapers from Camp Gordon Johnston, not Camp Gordon, available from the gift shop for a donation of \$15.00 plus \$5.00 shipping. Checks should be made out to:

The Camp Gordon Johnston Association. P.O. Box 1334, Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Subject: Unit Rosters Name: Alan Schmidt

Email: alan_schmidt57@yahoo.com

Comments:

I'm looking for my father Wallace L. Schmidt(Portland,OR) who was station at CGJ in 1944. I'm unsure of his unit. However I noticed a Schmidt listed in the 336 Harbor Craft Company. No first name listed. (no first names listed for any soldiers in that unit). Any assistance would greatly be appreciated. Thank you, Alan Schmidt

Editor: Any member of the 336th historic organization is welcome to respond to Mr. Schmidt. Also an internet search of military records would be helpful, perhaps a student would be willing to take this on as a class project.



Camp Gordon Johston Participates in National Brotherhood Ride

Ms Lisa Munson, Executive Director (and CGJA Secretary) presents banner to Brotherhood Rider leader. Banner produced by CGJA and signed by all donors to honor the natuional effort of the riders.

WWII Training exercises at Carrabelle Beach- site of the new CGJ WWII Museum Location Photo courtesy of U.S. Army



Amphibian Engineers Come Ashore

Camp Carrabelle, FL—December 20, 1942—General view of beach head established by
Engineer Amphibian Command during practice landing operation here. Note large
landing boats used to bring ashore heavy vehicles, guns and supplies.

EDITORS: This picture is for release in morning papers of Tuesday, December 22, or
any time thereafter. —PLEASE OBSERVE RELEASE DATE.

ATL1857..........ATLANTA BUREAU

It was a Long, Long Way From Here to There, but They Got There





From the location of the property the Museum will be built upon, the soldiers training here had no idea where or when they would go into battle. The 28th and the 4th Infantry Divisions traveled to England and then landed on Normandy Beach,the 4th Division on D-Day, June 6th, 1944, the 28th division on July 22nd, 1944. Later the 28th was bloodied at the battle of Hurtgen Forest in Belgium.

The Special Brigades, shown training above at Carrabelle Beach, served under General MacArthur's *Soutwest Pacific Area (SWPA)* starting in New Guinea, then Island hopping to the Phillipines, ending up on occupation duty in Japan.

Starting here, and, sadly for many, ending there.







Three nephews visit Museum in honor of their uncle.

William L. Wheeler (Pictured on left) trained at Camp Gordon Johnston. He had family in Perry, Florida and when he had time off he would visit them. This is what the nephews remember. William passed away before being able to visit the Museum

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

What a BIG day September 24, 2016 was for CGJ. How fitting it is that CGJ's celebration of Smithsonian Magazine National Museum Day would also culminate in the brief groundbreaking ceremony for construction of the permanent CGJ Museum. As you can see in this edition, events are expanding to enrich the visitor's experience when they visit the museum on these special occasions. The auto Club rally and the Military Vehicle Preservation Association display are greatly appreciated by CGJ and, yes, all the visitors check out more than one of these vehicles.

Upcoming events:

Nov 11: the participation in the Franklin County School Veterans Day program

Nov 11-12 - The 6th annual golf tournament at St. Joseph Bay Golf Club in Port St. Joe will also honor all first responders.

Dec 7th – Remember Pearl Harbor Day at the CGJ Museum.

More construction progress will be reported in future editions of the AMPHIBIAN, so look for the next newsletter.

David k Butler, President, CGJA

~ USO Dance ~

A fundraiser for CAMP GORDON JOHNSTON WWII MUSEUM & ST. JOSEPH BAY GOLF CLUB (SJBGC)

Honoring Our Veterans and First Responders

Friday November 11, 2016 - 6:00 p.m. EST SJBGC, 700 Country Club Road

- MUSIC by Crossroads Band playing 40s music and other songs
- DINNER in a mess line
- BONFIRE by the pond
- SILENT AUCTION

DRESS for a USO dance — Casual dress — Would love to see everyone in their armed services or first responders uniform, or 1940s outfits. \$20.00 per person includes a meal and 1 beer or wine. A cash bar will also be available.



~ GOLF TOURNAMENT ~

Saturday November 12, 2016 Begin at 11:30 a.m. EST - Golf at 12:00 noon EST

Come dance on the patio, eat under the tent, or sit around the bonfire Friday night.

Then play in the golf tournament Saturday morning.

Let's Remember Our Veterans and First Responders!