



ARMY SERVICE FORCES

Training Center



AMPHIBIAN

Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla.



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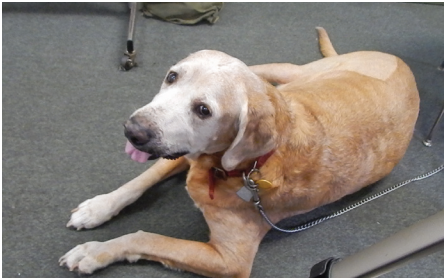
AMPHIBIAN

April, 2016



Camp Gordon Johnston Days 2016 **One For The Books!**

Presidents' Message: Our recent Camp Gordon Johnston Days event was one of our best in recent memory. The MVPA, Tyndall AFB, the vendors who came and set up their booths, Congresswoman Gwen Graham, Vet Events from Tallahassee and the many community and veteran groups who participated made this year's event extra special. The local restaurants were extra busy and the tourists were here from the RV resorts. Carrabelle was humming with people. The WWII veteran who came farthest was from Revere, Massachusetts (and also my brother). The CGJA volunteers, the City of Carrabelle and William Massey who supervised the prisoners from Franklin Correction Institution were most helpful setting up the tents. The Carrabelle Chamber of Commerce pitched in and handled all the vendors. We also had eight WWII veterans attend and Manny was able to videotape interviews for our research library collection. I would be remiss if I didn't pay special thanks to our Executive Secretary Michael Horvath who, among other duties, got the word out to the vendors and parade participants. Unfortunately Michael was sidelined with a health issue and was unable to attend the events. Because of Michael's efforts we had more participants and vendors this year.



A Very Special Visitor

Camp Gordon Johnston Days brought us a unique and very special visitor from Alabama, Rocky. Rocky is a two time veteran of the war in Iraq and a very special canine. Rocky was bred in West Tennessee and is a mixture of two different breeds, the golden retriever and red blood hound. He was then trained to use his unique smelling ability in a variety of ways.

During the course of his tours of duty, Rocky saved at least twelve American lives. He has received all the medals deserving of a good soldier, including the Purple Heart, but the most significant he received, and highest award for a dog, is the award of Valor, the Silver Star.

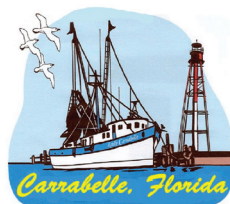
At the age of eight, Rocky was retired. Normally the dogs are given to their handlers, but Rocky's handler was killed, and Rocky was badly wounded at the same time. When these dogs are returned, they go to Lackland where they are quarantined so they can be checked out for diseases and parasites, then they are released. There is a waiting list for those wishing to adopt a service dog.

Rocky has already had fourteen surgeries, with more to come. He bears the scars of this on his body, making him immediately distinguishable. A caring vet in Alabama, where Rocky now lives with his owner 4th Infantry Division member Gerry Howard, takes care of Rocky free of charge. Gerry admits, however, he has spent thousands of dollars of his own money on Rocky as well.

Gerry takes Rocky everywhere he goes and has gotten a friend, a small brown dog, for Rocky who helps to keep the war veteran calm. Every dog needs a little pal. Rocky is now thirteen years old. When he dies, his ashes will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery with those of his former handler. Sometimes heroes come in a form we do not talk about or expect. Rocky is one of those heroes we need to remember.

The City of Carrabelle would like to thank everyone who attended the Camp Gordon Johnston Days Reunion on March 11th & 12th. Your attendance made this year's event a huge success! We look forward to seeing you all again in March of 2017 when we once again pay tribute to the men and women who have served in our armed forces. While in Carrabelle, please take time to stop by the Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum, sponsor of the CGJ Days Reunion, to see actual WWII artefacts and learn about WWII training maneuvers conducted right here in our local community. Donations are greatly appreciated, as construction of the new home of CGJ WWII Museum building begins on West Highway 98. A special thank you goes out to the Carrabelle Chamber of Commerce and each and every one of the many hardworking volunteers who every year make this event possible. Distinctive recognition goes to Mike Horvath for his countless volunteer hours devoted to promoting and organizing the CGJ Days Parade, military vehicle display, and vendor booths.

Brenda La Paz, Mayor
City of Carrabelle



CGJA receives no help from the 2016 Florida Legislative Session

Governor Scott vetoed our 2015 request for assistance in funding our proposed permanent new complex at Carrabelle Beach. This year our request never got through committees.

This puts "Plan B" in place as we pare back our expansion plans. Having already expended over \$300,000.00 in securing property and architectural plans for the proposed site, in business terms, we will be "retrenching" with a smaller initial footprint on the property.

The Franklin County TDC, realizing our situation, and recognizing the economic value The CGJ WWII Museum adds to our County, has blessed us with financial assistance allowing this initial move.

The Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum entered its DUKW in "Springtime Tallahassee" parade

As a member of the National Military Vehicle Preservation Association, the Museum's WWII Amphibious Truck (DUKW) was featured as part of the parade to promote our museum. The parade was held on April 2nd. in Tallahassee, Florida

CGJ WWII Museum to participate in "Cocktails and Camo" sponsored by the Capitol Area Chapter of the American Red Cross

On April 7th the American Red Cross will be holding a fund raising event at Flightline at the Tallahassee Airport. The museum will be displaying our WWII DUKW and supplying WWII uniforms for display.

CGJA Executive Secretary Michael Horvath Hospitalized

After putting together what is the best CGJ Days parade in the past five years, Mike was taken to TMH with congestive heart failure. He has been progressing slowly and was transferred out of ICU into rehab on March 30th. Michael was unable to see the results of his tireless efforts to make this event one of the best in recent memory but has been keeping up with our current events. We all want Michael to get his health back and follow doctor's orders. This is probably the most rest and relaxation he's had in the past 5 years.

CGJA Signs Contract with Franklin County for Grant Money

CGJA President Anthony "Tony" Minichiello met with County Attorney Mike Shuler on Thursday, April 1st and signed the formal paperwork needed to begin the process of building our new building which will be located at Carrabelle Beach, Florida.

The significance of this new location is central to the importance of the Amphibious Training Center that operated at the camp during WWII.. The museum property also fronts along Hwy 98 and the beaches where so many practice landings occurred. LST's, LCVP's, DUKW's and a variety of newly designed landing craft trained under battle conditions on this and other area beaches developing the logistic and tactical operations necessary for amphibious landings in Europe and the Pacific and was one of the largest such training centers in the south.

Old coins, buttons and other artifacts dropped or torn from soldiers while crawling under and jumping over barbed wire and other impediments have been found on the museum property. There is a historic marker on the property noting this fact.

WWII veterans interviewed during CGJ Days event

During the Camp Gordon Johnston Days event Manny Gass, CGJA Asst. Curator took time to interview five WWII veterans who attended this year's event. The interviews will be placed in the research library alongside previous interviews from various veterans, some who trained here during the Camp's operation.

Among those interviewed:

Walter Mallet: Enlisting in the Navy prior to America's entry into WWII, Walter was seriously injured while serving in the Pacific aboard the USS Ticonderoga. On January 21, 1945 she was attacked by Japanese Kamikazi aircraft and severely damaged. Walter was awarded the Navy Cross for his bravery during the attacks.

Arthur Minichiello: Enlisting in the Navy at age 17, Arthur was a "Plank Owner" on the USS New Jersey, and served in the Pacific with the 3rd and 5th Fleets under Admirals Spruance and Halsey.

Bob Greenberg, Bryce Thorton and Bill Bigham also gave interviews of their experiences during the war.

A Curator's Point of View

Working at the museum for the last eighteen years has afforded me a unique opportunity—the ability to touch so many lives I would never have come into contact with in my former occupation. The lives I speak of are the lives of so many veterans.

Having begun this task in 1998, I have met many World War II veterans and heard their unique stories, stories I have then passed on to other visitors. Text books are all well and good, but they are nothing to first-hand accounts told by the individuals who actually participated in a war that shaped our nation. Not only have their stories inspired me, but they have touched my heart.

One of the questions I am so often asked is why I do this. There is certainly no money in it, so it cannot be financial. The truth is, I guess, I do it for my father and my step father; both of these men participated in World War II. My dad was shell shocked and spent the remainder of his life in the VA. My step father was more fortunate and, though he never talked about his time in the war, I am sure it changed his life forever, as it did all the others who fought.

During Camp Gordon Johnston Days this year, I met two very special veterans from WWII that had never been to the museum before. Both touched me in a way I cannot explain. I just knew I stood in the presence of greatness, men who had risked their all for us. I hope this country never forgets these men and the thousands just like them I have grown to know over the years.

Then, of course, there was Rocky, a veteran of the current war. Most people would look at Rocky and see a dog, someone's pet, but the truth of the matter is that all of the scars on his thirteen year old body are battle scars from a land mine, a mine that killed his handler. When Rocky dies, he will be cremated and buried at Arlington with his handler. Rocky is a highly decorated veteran, one who gave his all, just as any veteran has. Rocky, too, touched my heart.

The bottom line is that I do this so no veteran is forgotten. We owe our military so much and I try to see that people never forget that. Freedom is not free and many have paid the price for us. As Ronald Reagan said in one of his Memorial Day speeches: "All we can do is remember."

More Photos from CGJ Days 2016.....





The Camp Gordon Johnston Association

Post Office Box 1334
Carrabelle, Florida 32322
(850) 697-8575

www.campgordonjohnston.com e-mail: campgordonjohnston@fairpoint.net

The Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum is dedicated to the memories of the
"Amphibious Soldiers" of WWII.

The Camp Gordon Johnston Association has made the decision to raise the yearly Membership Dues of \$10.00 to \$20.00. This is being increased because of rising costs of operating the Museum. Dues can be mailed to:

Camp Gordon Johnston Association

PO Box 1334

Carrabelle FL 32322

Our members are the key to our success and we are inviting you to join the team and become a member of Camp Gordon Johnston by filling out the Membership Form.

Sincerely,

Mike Horvath, Secretary

Board of Directors, Camp Gordon Johnston Museum

Charter Membership

Please Print, Fill Out and Mail with your enclosed check to:

Camp Gordon Johnston Museum Fund

P.O. Box 1334

Carrabelle FL 32322

Yes, I want to support the Camp Gordon Johnston Museum and our WWII veterans!

Please accept my tax deductible contribution in the amount of

Corps ____ \$250.00, Division ____ \$200.00, Brigade ____ \$150.00,

Battalion ____ 100.00, Company ____ \$50.00

I do not wish to be a charter member, but would like to pay my dues \$ _____

Contact person's name _____

Company or individual name _____

Mailing Address _____

Street Address (if different than mailing address) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

