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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH, 2021

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Two names worth remembering

I am not much interested in autographs. Never have been.

Several of my friends are avid autograph hounds. They're always after the scribbled signatures of professional athletes, comic book artists and writers, musicians, TV and movie stars, etc.

But I do have two autographs and you can see them on this page.

One belongs to an old friend from my Florida newspapering days -- Don

Langer. Don served with the Fifth Marine Regiment, a unit of the vaunted First Marine Division.

I found this out one day at work when I teased Don about eating out so often. It seemed like every day he came to work and told a story about a great meal he

had just enjoyed.

When I joked with him about it, he smiled and said "Years ago when I was on Guadalcanal I promised myself I'd eat what I wanted and as much as I wanted when I wanted."

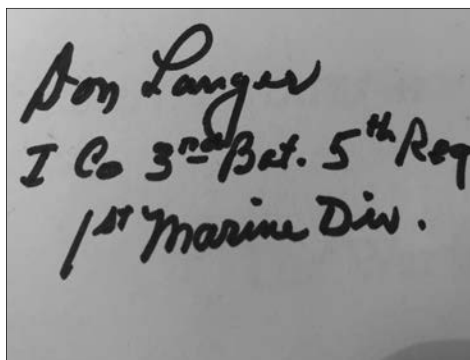
Guadalcanal?

A lifelong military history buff, I asked Don for his story.

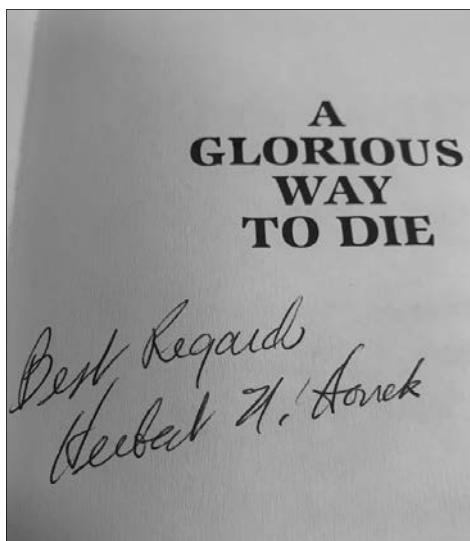
My buddy was in the thick of the savage fighting on Guadalcanal. He told me a few stories about the combat, but mostly he talked about how hungry he and his fellow Marines got after the Japanese Navy cut off their supply lines. Decades later, Don was able to laugh about it. But in the dank, deadly jungles of "the Canal," the lack of food compounded what was already a dire situation.

Don happily autographed my copy of a book on the Guadalcanal campaign.

The second autograph in my two-autograph collection was provided by retired Navy captain Herbert N. Houck. Capt. Houck and I, along with a mutual acquaintance, dined together at a restaurant in Cape Coral



Don Langer
I Co 3rd Bat. 5th Reg
1st Marine Div.



A
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WAY
TO DIE

Best Regards
Herbert N. Houck

Florida.

Capt. Houck was a three-time recipient of the Navy Cross and a flying ace with six aerial victories.

His most famous feat occurred on April 7, 1945. Capt. Houck was part of a wave of 40 torpedo bombers that intercepted a Japanese naval sortie on the way to Okinawa. Among the Japanese ships was the largest battleship in the world, the Yamato.

Capt. Houck and his fellow Marine pilots decimated the mighty battleship, sending it to the ocean floor with more than 2,500 men aboard.

Capt. Houck signed my copy of a book about the Yamato's final mission.

I may not have many autographs. But the two I have are hard to beat.



Jimmy
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Moore's Coast Guard career put an end to boredom

By Erik Green
SPORTS EDITOR

It was the 1980s. Large ships sailing into the U.S. from South America could be running dope and Ronald Reagan had declared war on drugs.

Lynn Moore was a young U.S. Coast Guard flight engineer (among other titles) on the front lines of that war. He was a C-130 crew member at that time, flying high above the ocean looking for those up to no good. Orders had come down to be on the lookout for a certain ship leaving South America and, eventually, they found it. They called for a Coast Guard cutter to send a boarding team to the suspicious vessel. Initially, they found nothing. Agents embedded with a drug cartel in South America radioed and told them to check the aft (rear) fuel tank.

"He had five tons of cocaine (inside)," said Moore, now retired and working as a guidance counselor at



Lynn Moore

Pleasant Valley Innovative School (PVIS) in Eton. "The DEA had agents in South America loading the boats undercover. They said here's the boat,

here's where it's going, here's where the drugs are. There was a lot of stuff in the 80s that people don't know about."

Moore points out that at the time the Coast Guard was under the U.S. Department of Transportation, not the Department of Defense. Today, the Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security. Because the Coast Guard was not D.O.D. during Moore's early years, they could do things that the regular military could not such as board foreign vessels without potentially starting an actual war.

During the height of the drug war years, Moore and his mates hauled helicopters into Lima, Peru to be used in destroying the coca fields that supplied the cocaine trade. They did so without any diplomatic repercussions.

"We were able to sort of skirt the rules because we were not military," he said.

That doesn't mean there were no repercussions. When stationed in Clearwater, Fla. during the worst of the drug war killings in Florida, Coast Guard members were instructed not to wear their uniforms to and from work because they might be murdered. It was the same in Miami, which was the murder capital of the U.S. in 1981.

Moore has a catalog of stories like these. He once jumped out of a helicopter to save some stranded men off the coast of Honduras. The helicopter belonged to the U.S. embassy and one of the stranded men was a CIA agent involved in the Iran-Contra affair. The island at which their boat had overturned was being used as base in the operation. You just never, really, know what's going on in the world.

In addition to his hair raising adventures outside an aircraft, Moore

SEE MOORE, PAGE 5



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MOORE: No shortage of adventures during 20-year Coast Guard career

FROM PAGE 4

had plenty of precarious situations inside one as well. He was stationed in Alaska and weather was as big a foe as any machine gun carrying drug runner.

"We took off once in Alaska in a very strong headwind," Moore said. "As we turned, heading into the mountains, we made our right turnout to avoid the mountains and the winds died. The pilot took the yoke (steering mechanism) from full left fighting the wind to full right and back. So after we got straightened out, I told the pilot I had never seen the yoke that far over and he said he had never had it that far. We probably rolled 45-60 degrees wing down. We almost rolled the airplane. We took off in an almost 40 knot (46 mph) headwind coming off the mountains. Luckily, he was a really good pilot."

Part of Moore's job was working on airplane engines. He would often be on board a plane that had just received a replacement engine. His job was to make sure it worked ... while in the air.

"We fly on the same aircraft we work on," Moore said. "Once I became more qualified and experienced, I was on cases where we lost an engine. We would land at a different airport; I'd call and tell them to send me a new engine and two guys to work



Kathy and Lynn Moore

on it. Then we'd change the engine. Then two pilots and I would do a test flight on it to make sure the engine worked, land back, load up the bad engine, the rest of the crew, and fly back home."

Home for Moore began in Cleveland, Tenn. where he met his wife Kathy, who is now the principal at Chatsworth Elementary. They were high school sweethearts and married soon after he joined the Coast Guard. They have two children and three grandchildren.

Moore essentially joined the Coast Guard because

he was bored with his welding job after high school. He just happened to notice a Coast Guard recruiter in Knoxville while on an errand for his employer. That was 1979 and he joined the Coast Guard that day. He would go on to spend 20 years in the Coast Guard, with stops (after training) in Alaska twice, Clearwater, Fla., and Jacksonville, Fla. He retired in 1999 and the family moved back to Cleveland, Tenn.

Today his focus is on the students at PVIS, the county's alternative school. Some students are there for credit recovery purposes. Others are there due to discipline issues. Moore is enthusiastic about his work at the school. He maintains the perspective that the students there are not "bad kids," just kids that need love and guidance like anyone else.

"We don't look at any of our kids as bad kids," Moore said. "We have kids who have made mistakes. For whatever reason they're behind in credits or they made a mistake and got sent here for discipline. That just means they're kids. Kids make mistakes."

Both Lynn and Kathy are nearing retirement from the education field, but he isn't one to go sit in a rocking chair somewhere.

"I've got three more years here and will enjoy retirement, do yard work, and enjoy the grandkids," he said.



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Marines Corps experience teaches lessons in discipline

By Erik Green
SPORTS EDITOR

When someone joins the military in the midst of a war, there's no telling what the outcome will be.

For Ben Crump, a Murray County High School graduate and now an assistant football coach there, his military journey led him back to where he began and, thankfully, in one piece. It's obviously not that way for everyone, particularly Marines who sign up to carry a rifle and take the fight to the enemy like he did. Today, the 29-year-old husband and father enjoys giving back to the kids at Murray while dealing with the multitude of injuries he received in service to the country.

"My wife and I decided it would be best to do eight years and go home, settle down, raise the family and live out our days here in Chatsworth," he said. "It was adventurous. Going different places to train, working with different branches, working with different units and learning about their jobs, and you can teach them about yours. The overall experience, you'll never come close to anything like that."

Crump was a punter for the Indians and graduated in 2011. He didn't think he was college football material so he went as a regular student. Eventually, he decided college wasn't for him, so he decided to give the military a go. He was sworn into the Poolee Program (delayed entry) in February of 2013 and went to boot camp at Parris Island, S.C. in July.

"I kind of knew what was going on because my grandfather was a Marine," said Crump, whose father Terry is on the Chatsworth City Council. "He had briefly told me about it. He was in Vietnam."

Every Marine has a Parris Island story and Crump's is about par for the course: heat, sand fleas, lots of running and getting yelled at.

"As soon as we came up to the gates, the driver told us to put our heads



Ben Crump

down," Crump said. "The next thing you know, we're getting out of the van and a drill instructor is yelling at us, telling us to hurry up, get out of the van, and get on the yellow footprints."

And a Marine was born.

"Playing sports I was used to getting yelled at," Crump said. "It was the unknown. Everybody hears about the yellow footprints and going through the big double doors one time and one time only. But it was more along the lines of, dang, the unknown. What's next?"

Crump took up the simple philoso-

CRUMP: Stint in Marines taught lessons in discipline

FROM PAGE 6

phy of doing what he was told in order to get through the wild weeks ahead.

"It went real well," Crump said. "It was hot. I went from July to October but you learn a lot of discipline. You learn a little about the Marine Corps, little bits of knowledge, but you learn discipline."

Crump could have chosen any number of career paths, but signed an infantry contract.

"Once I graduated boot camp, I came home for 10 days and had to report to Camp Geiger, N.C. for infantry training," he said.

Crump understood the basics of the fact that America was, essentially, involved in two wars.

"We did a workup to go to Afghanistan," Crump said. "But they ended up not taking us."

He spent some time in Twenty Nine Palms, Calif. in 2014 for desert warfare training but he didn't have to use it. From there, Crump deployed with 2nd Battalion, Sixth Marines. Crump was with a recon battalion and deployed to various countries like Spain and Dubai in 2015. They spent most of their time, however, off the coast of Iraq on Navy ships that were firing on enemy targets. Some of his fellow Marines went into Mosul, Iraq and would spend four months longer there on missions. Crump's time was spent helping maintain weapons and equipment during that deployment.



Crump with Ethan Peden (left) and stepson William Kitts Dover.

After deployment, Crump went to military police for six months to be a gate guard. He briefly considered a career in law enforcement, but then reenlisted instead and eventually found his way into a range coaching and marksmanship instructor position in Virginia. He would go on to serve a total of eight years before retiring.

"It was definitely a mind opening experience," Crump said.





**THE STAFF OF
THE CHATSWORTH TIMES
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Ronald Reagan

Jimmy Espy, Sherri Jenkins, Jeremy Morgan,
Kelly Cardozo, and Erik Green

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Luck of the draw helped bring Murray soldier home

By Jimmy Espy
EDITOR

Just about every soldier who ever served under combat conditions has at least one tale to tell of a close call.

Bullets whizzing inches overhead. A mortar round that lasted just far enough away. An attack that was called off at the last minute.

For Rembert Townsend, a Murray County native, his close call came in the waning days of 1944.

Townsend was serving as a company clerk with the 949th Field Artillery battalion. It was winter and it was bitterly cold but that didn't keep the Germans from launching a powerful counteroffensive designed to ultimately capture the great port of Antwerp and foil the Allies offensive in Western Europe.

Townsend's unit was south of the area the Germans struck in what would become known as The Battle of the Bulge. Though initially suc-

cessful, the German offensive was increasingly bogged down by determined pockets of resistance.

Allied commanders quickly began to shift their forces to counterattack the Germans.

The 949th Field Artillery was attached to the 193 Field Artillery Group in the III Corps of Gen. George Patton's Third Army. Patton set a relentless pace for his command and soon the III Corps was attacking the Germans.

Fighting excellent German troops in harsh winter weather, casualties began to mount and in short order there developed a need for more front line infantry troops.

Following is a letter dated May 24, 1945 written by Rembert Townsend to his girl back home, Frances Wentford (who he would later marry) telling what had happened to him during those wild, bloody, confusing days at the Battle of the Bulge. (The letter, provided by Rembert's son Pat, is pub-



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAT TOWNSEND

Rembert Townsend, dressed in his Army uniform, with his parents Ben and Stella Townsend.

lished here without changes to spelling, punctuation typography, etc.)

"Back last winter around the 15th of December an order came down that our battalion would transfer so many guys tot he infantry. Well it so happened that at the time we were way below our authorized strength, as a result of which the Battalion Commander said that we would have to send one fallow. Well there were 7 of us to begin with. Two of them were too old to go. One was a tack sergeant and they wouldn't take him, so that left only 4 of us for them to choose. Two of the four has been here a long time much longer than I had so I marked them off my list because the Colonel had

not told us who was going that only left me and another guy. Well he was a real small fellow and he was older than I so I had made up my mind that I would be the one to go. We all were so nervous for about 3 days waiting to find out who was going we didn't get anything done. It finally turned out hat the little fellow was the one that went. It was just before the Germans broke through. They gave them 13 hours training as infantrymen and sent them into the lines. **THE BOY WAS KILLED ABOUT A MONTH LATER, IN FACT, PRACTICALLY ALL OF THEM ARE EITHER KILLED OR WOUNDED**

SEE **TOWNSEND**, PAGE 9

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAT TOWNSEND

Sweethearts Rembert and Frances married soon after his return from the war.

TOWNSEND: A lucky break

FROM PAGE 8

NOW. IT GIVES ME CHILLS EVERYTIME I THINK ABOUT IT BECAUSED IT COULD JUST AS EASILY BEEN ME.

I hope they don;t do anything like that and send me tot he Pacific, because darling that would be rough. AFTER ALL I HAVE GOT TO GET HOM SOMETIME, MAYBE I CAN MAKE APRIL OF NEXT YEAR.

Well Darling it is almost 10 oclock so I think I will go to be. So until later.

*All MY LOVE,
Rembert*

Townsend's desire to avoid action in the Pacific Theater was shared by millions of other American servicemen. They got their wish after the Japanese surrendered following the atomic bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Rembert came home in 1946 and married his Murray County sweetheart. She became a school teacher and he served 24 years as the county's clerk of Superior Court.

He died in December of 2000, more than 50 years after not being sent into combat at "the Bulge."

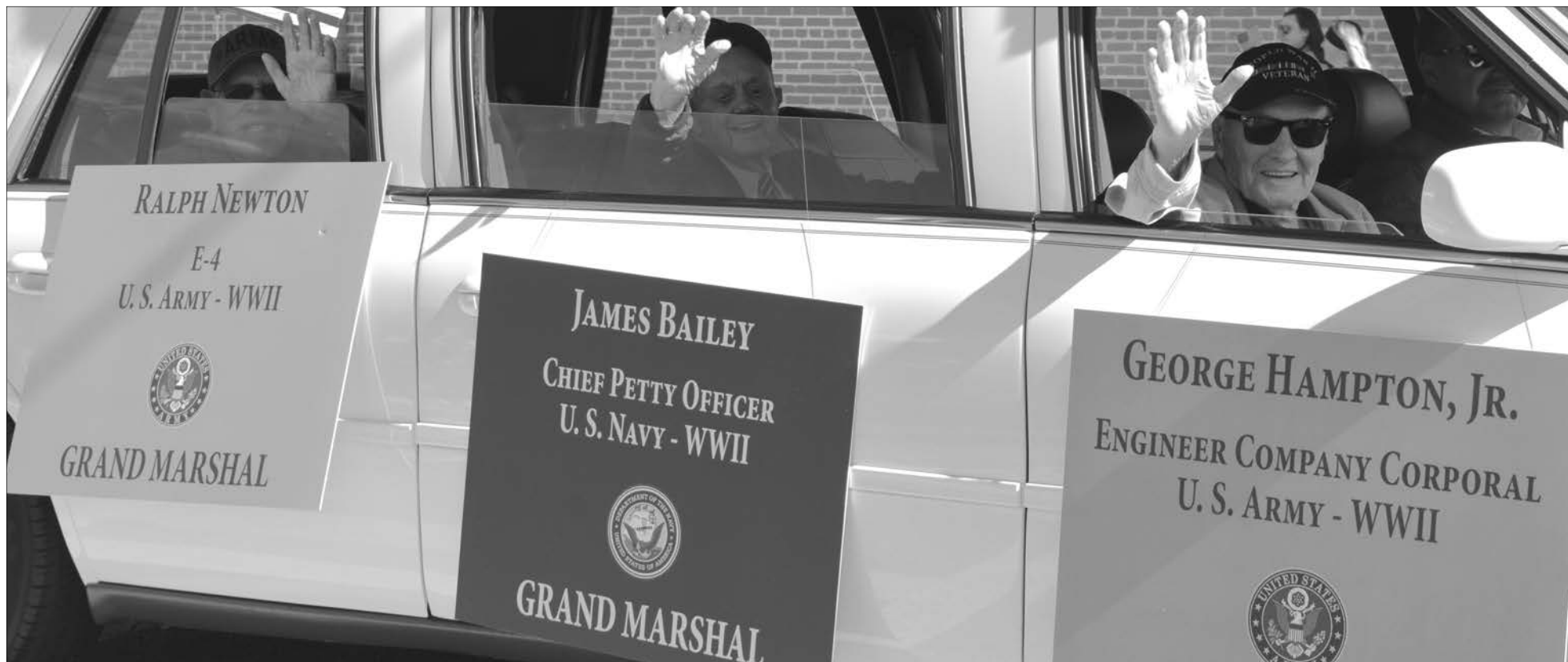


A photo of an unidentified fellow G.I. taken somewhere in Europe. Rembert Townsend brought this photo and others home from Europe after the war.

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Three Murray County residents who served in the armed forces in World War II were the grand marshals of the Veterans Celebration Parade in Chatsworth on Saturday. The three veterans are George

Hampton, Jr. and Ralph Newton, both of the Army, and James Bailey, a chief petty officer in the U.S. Navy.

Thank you Veterans!

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- Abraham Lincoln

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