The Museum was honored to have Fredericksburg native, Capt. Michael Tatsch (U.S. Navy, Ret), as this year’s Veterans’ Day speaker. (Tatsch joined the Navy to follow in the footsteps of Bill Phelps, his Boy Scout Scoutmaster who had been a World War II Navy Pilot.) His talk focused on the important themes of humility and lifelong service to the community. He quoted former President John F. Kennedy who said:

“Today, we give our thanks, most of all, for the ideals of honor and faith we inherit from our forefathers -- for the decency of purpose, steadfastness of resolve and strength of will, for the courage and humility, which they possessed and which we must seek every day to emulate. As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

(Continued on Page 5)
The Museum’s recent Symposium, held 16 September, was entitled “Behind the Wire: Life as a POW and Internee.” Its focus was on POW and internment camps in various wars, including personal accounts by both military and civilian prisoners. Topics included a comparison of European and Pacific POW camps, life in a family internment camp, an assessment of the odds of surviving in these camps and morale levels.

Speakers included: Richard Frank, historian and author of books on the Pacific War and frequent Nimitz speaker; Arnold Krammer, PhD, university professor and historian; Gail Barnett, one of the first babies to be born a POW at Santo Tomas Internment Camp in the Philippines; Fiske Hanley, II, prisoner of the brutal Kempei Tai Military Police in Japan; William McWhorter, Executive Director of the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission; Stephen L. Moore, author of books on WW11, including two that dealt with U.S. POWs; Liz Irvine, who was interned with members of her family in the Philippines; Joseph E. Milligan, USAF (Ret), dinner speaker, and survivor of six years in prison in North Vietnam. High School students from Boerne, TX, Middle School North also performed their award winning play telling the story of U.S. nurses imprisoned in the Philippines.

We would like to thank our donors and sponsors who made this Symposium possible: Dian Graves Owen Foundation, Dr. Leon Bromberg Charitable Trust, K Bar J Fund, H-E-B, Dodge Jones Foundation, Kickapoo Springs Foundation, Legett Foundation and Fischer & Wieser. The program was also made possible in part with a grant from Humanities Texas.

Following are brief accounts of the ordeals experienced as prisoners of war by Fiske Hanley, II in Japan and Colonel Joseph Milligan in North Vietnam. To listen to the complete presentations of the speakers, please contact Rollin’ Recording on (830) 537-5494. Books written by speakers on this subject are available through the Nimitz Bookstore. Please see Page 9.

COL. JOSEPH E. MILLIGAN, USAF (Ret):
Decorated Vietnam Veteran

Milligan, was shot down over North Vietnam in May 1967 on his 113th combat mission. His plane erupted into a fireball, and as he ejected, he became a fireball, himself. He was badly burned on both arms and his face/head. He was marched to a prison camp and imprisoned in a cell with other POWs. All of the aviators imprisoned with him had serious and multiple injuries. There was no medical treatment, and the men did what they could to help one another. Milligan’s arms began to literally rot, until he allowed flies to lay eggs, and the maggots ate all the dead flesh.

Besides a lack of medical treatment, food and water were in very short supply. Twice a day, they were given a pint of boiled water. This was insufficient, particularly since they also “sacrificed” part of this water to treat the wounds of their cell mates. Thus, they became very dehydrated. Another problem was a lack of clothing and shoes, and they almost froze to death. They were fed meager amounts of food twice a day. Meals consisted of watery soup with a couple of leaves, and rice or bread. At times, the bread was moldy with cockroaches and rat droppings.

Milligan and the others were tortured. In Milligan’s case, they tied his elbows behind his back and cinched him up, rotating his elbows up over his head, thereby dislocating both of his shoulders. Other means of torture resulted in nerve damage. To this day, there is never a time when he is without pain due to the brutal treatment he received.

Despite the lack of medical treatment and horrific conditions, the survival rate for those imprisoned in North Vietnam was high. Somehow, the prisoners kept hope alive and believed the U.S. would not leave them behind.

Milligan spent nearly six years as a POW and was finally released in February 1973. He was awarded the Silver Star for his valor. His citation read in part: “Ignoring international agreements on treatment of prisoners of war, the enemy resorted to mental and physical cruelties to obtain information, confessions, and propaganda materials. Captain Milligan resisted their demands by calling upon his deepest inner strengths in a manner which reflected his devotion to duty and brought great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.”
“SECOND LT. FISKE HANLEY, II
“Special Prisoner” of the Kempei Tai

Trained as a flight engineer, Hanley was selected as a crew member on the B-29 Superfortress, a four-engine heavy bomber which was used toward the end of the war to carry out a massive incendiary bombing of Tokyo. On their seventh mission, 27 March 1945, Hanley and the crew dropped 12,100-pound naval mines on a major Japanese waterway. Major units of the Japanese fleet were below them firing, and all four engines exploded in fire. Only two of the crew got out of the plane, Hanley and the co-pilot. They landed in a rice paddy and were instantly attacked by a mob of civilians who tried to kill them. A Japanese police officer intervened, and they were imprisoned.

Hanley soon learned that he and the others were not considered ordinary POWs. Instead, they were regarded as "Special Prisoners," who would be tried and executed for killing innocent women and children. They were guarded by the dreaded Kempei Tai officers (the equivalent of Hitler's Gestapo). There were special rules, including no medical attention, and in fact, the Kempei Tai officers purposely infected his wounds. Hanley and his fellow prisoners got one half rations -- a ball of rice similar in size to a golf ball. They were beaten with rifle butts and bamboo sticks called kendo clubs. There were also many brutal interrogations. They were housed in a prison across a moat from the Emperor's Palace. They lived in squalor in a fetid cell. There was no bathing, and only one latrine for ten prisoners. Anyone badly wounded died. Many disappeared and were executed.

On 15 August, all of the prisoners were handcuffed and blindfolded and put on trucks. They were then imprisoned in Camp Omori, a regular Japanese prisoner camp on Tokyo Bay. Hanley said he thought he was in a "country club." On 29 August, the prisoners were liberated and watched the peace signing ceremony from nearby ships.

The horrors of the war came alive at night for a long time as Hanley relived his experiences with constant fears of execution.

This special exhibition pays homage to the last dreadnought in existence in the world, the Battleship Texas, commissioned more than 100 years ago. The dreadnought was the predominant type of battleship in the early 20th century. The distinctive all-big-gun armament of the dreadnought was developed as world navies sought to increase the range and power of the armament of their battleships.

The Texas is a veteran of Veracruz (1914) and both World Wars, and is credited with the introduction of advances in gunnery, aviation, and radar. The exhibition, organized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, highlights the history of the Battleship Texas in service to the United States Navy through WWII where it served in North Africa, Normandy, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. It showcases approximately 60 artifacts of the only surviving U.S. Navy vessel to have seen action in both world wars. Objects on view include select pieces from the silver service presented to the ship by the people of Texas, and photographs and personal items from men who served aboard it. A special listening station shares crew member memories of service aboard the ship during WWII.

The Battleship Texas is now a museum ship at San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site. This exhibit is free to the public and does not require a museum ticket.
The 3rd Annual Battle Buddies Classic Sporting Clay Shoot was held 24 September, after being blown off course from its original August date by Hurricane Harvey. More than 115 shooters met at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio, Texas, for an afternoon of clay pigeons. Teams of Wounded Warriors and disabled veterans from Operation Military Embrace, Combat Marine Outdoors, Operation Comfort, and Takata Corporation enjoyed their day outdoors on the shooting course. The nationally-ranked Schreiner University Shooting Team joined the field, as well as manned the Long Bird Skill Challenge and raffle table.

The event raised almost $40,000 for the Admiral Nimitz Foundation in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, and for the co-beneficiary, Veterans Assistance Dogs of Texas. VADogs of Texas is a 501c3 non-profit which trains companion therapy dogs for physically and emotionally disabled veterans. The organization visits area kill shelters and rescues large dogs which show the disposition and temperament necessary for this service.

A sincere thank you to sponsors: Valero Energy Corporation, Mary & Mike Porter, Chuck Scianna, Brooks City Base, Toyota Motors of North America, Conceptual MindWorks, H-E-B, Steve Volkman in memory of 1st Sergeant George E. Volkman, TK Holdings, Inc., The National Rifle Association, Dogologie, Anders Realty, Crenwelge Motors of Kerrville, Jefferson Bank, Security Service Federal Credit Union, The Swain Ranch, J.E. Cauthen & Sons, Col. & Mrs. Richard Keller (Ret), Brenda & Bruce Nichols, and James Calvert. We also wish to thank our many silent auction donors.

General Mike Hagee presents half of the proceeds of the 2017 Battle Buddies Classic to Steve Volkman, Exec. Dir., Veterans Assistance Dogs of Texas.

Mark your Calendar

THE FOURTH ANNUAL BATTLE BUDDIES CLASSIC will be held Saturday morning, 25 August 2018. Please save the date and join us then!
Leadership Seminar to Feature Texas State Representative Rick Miller

On Friday, April 13th, be lucky and join us for the 2018 Leadership Seminar, to be held in the Nimitz Museum Ballroom at 3pm. Texas State Representative, and US Naval Academy graduate Rick Miller, will be the featured speaker. Representative Miller was a career Naval Aviator with a Masters of Science degree in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He served as Senior Fellow on the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group and developed innovative war fighting concepts for the 21st Century Navy. Following transition from the Navy, he has worked as a senior consultant, VP, and Senior VP, focused on organizational and personnel improvement and development with several corporations. He is a recognized expert in human resource functions. Representative Miller serves Texas District 26 and resides in Sugar Land.

Doors to the Ballroom will open at 2:30pm. The approximately one-hour program will begin at 3pm and will be followed by a Q&A discussion with both Representative Miller and General Michael Hagee. Upon conclusion, attendees are invited to stay for a “Meet and Greet” cocktail reception.

Members of the Museum’s business and corporate membership program, the Premier Business Partners, receive complimentary seating. Premier Business Partners membership information may be requested from Mr. Rorie Cartier, (830) 997-8600 x242 or rcartier@nimitzfoundation.org.

The 2018 Leadership Seminar is open to the general public for a $10 registration fee. For reservations: call Barbara Ford, (830) 997-8600 x225, or email bfdord@nimitzfoundation.org.

Meet Savannah Richter, New Assistant Director of Development and Rentals Manager

From an early age, I was drawn to the stories of the men and women who came before me. I am honored to have had four great-grandfathers who were WWII veterans, one of whom was taken as a POW in Italy. Their selfless service and determination to survive has helped to shape me into who I am and where I am today.

I grew up in Temple, Texas, and graduated from Texas A&M University with a BS in Agricultural Communications and Journalism. I followed my passion for history and working with people into the classroom as a middle school Social Studies teacher and coach. After four years, I found a new home in Fredericksburg, where my great-grandparents lived for over 50 years. Here, at the Foundation and Museum, I have been able to bring all of my interests and strengths together into my position as an Assistant Director of Development and Rentals Manager. I could not have designed a more perfect job than this. When I’m not stewarding events, I’m at home cooking and spending time with my baby, a Blue Heeler named Midget.

Veterans’ Day (cont. from Page 1)

Tatsch went on to say how he felt these words apply to veterans he has known. He emphasized their humility -- their desire not to utter words, but to live them. They also have a lifelong commitment to service, even after they have retired. Many have incredible stories to tell, but often rarely do. There are so many heroes among us and yet we often do not know it. He then pointed to three local examples of veterans who continue to serve. These were General Michael Hagee (USMC, Ret.) who heads the National Museum of the Pacific War; Capt. George Fadok, Senior Naval Science Instructor for the Navy Junior ROTC at Fredericksburg High School; and Lt. Commander Tami King, Gillespie County Veterans Service Officer.

Welcoming the large crowd who came to honor the veterans was Museum Director Joe Cavanaugh. The Colors were posted and retired by the Fredericksburg High School NJROTC. Musical selections were provided by the Amble-side School of Fredericksburg. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Cadet Juan Laredo, and a wreath was presented by Cadet Anne Lafleur, both of the NJROTC. The Invocation was given by Captain Roger Spencer, USN (Ret). The rifle salute was by the Nimitz Living History Detachment, and Taps was played by Bill Smallwood.
Dear Members,

All of us at the Foundation and National Museum of the Pacific War wish you and your families Happy Holidays and a great 2018.

With your support and the work of our superb staff, we experienced another successful year in 2017. Most importantly, we had a highly successful year-long 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Museum on 24 February 1967. The staff put together a large 24-panel picture collage of the past 50 years that was premiered at our 50th birthday party in the Nimitz Ballroom on 24 February. The panels also spent a week on public display in the Texas State Capital Dome and two months at the International Airport in Austin, Texas. The Museum also served as the County Fair-Parade Grand-Marsh for 2017.

As you know, we opened the newly renovated Pacific Combat Zone, with its new amphitheater and Living History shows in 2017. The facilities and shows continue to receive great reviews from our visitors.

During 2017, we expanded our Education Department and its mission. We have also had success in recruiting outstanding new employees, two of whom are profiled in this newsletter. We are fortunate to have such a strong and dedicated team in place.

Many thanks to all of you who have already responded to our end-of-year Fund Drive request. If you have not had a chance to respond, I urge you to do so. We have set up a special donation link on our website to make such a contribution easy. This end-of-year appeal is important in helping us accomplish our overall educational mission.

Finally, we look forward to starting the renovation of the Nimitz Museum located in the old Nimitz Hotel next year. We will provide more information on this effort in next year’s newsletters.

Many thanks for your continued support of the Museum and our important educational mission.

Best Wishes and Happy New Year,

Mike Hagee

Please Remember the Museum in Your End-of-the-Year CHARITABLE GIVING

During this season of the year, please consider a gift to the Admiral Nimitz Foundation in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War.

One easy, tax-wise option may be through an IRA charitable rollover gift from your IRA to the Foundation – if you are at least age 70.5 years, you may:

- REDUCE YOUR CURRENT INCOME TAX
- SUPPORT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR
- SEE THE IMPACT OF YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING NOW
- REDUCE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF FEDERAL ESTATE AND GIFT TAXES
- REDUCE THE TAX IMPACT OF IRA REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS.

Visit with your investment manager or tax consultant about how this may benefit the Museum, and you and your family as well.

Donate online at: www.PacificWarMuseum.org

The Admiral Nimitz Foundation is a 501c(3) organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.
"A promise made is a promise kept." Best selling author, James Hornfischer, could well be uttering that phrase as he donates his personal collection of papers pertaining to the four books he has written on key aspects of the Pacific War to the Nimitz Education and Research Center. This promise goes back to 2004 at his first book launch event ever which was held in the Nimitz Ballroom. During the Q&A, Museum Director Joe Cavanaugh asked if he would consider making such a donation, and while surprised at the question, Hornfischer responded: "yes."

Hornfischer’s personal archive involves his research related to the following four books: *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors*, *Ship of Ghosts*, *Neptune’s Inferno* and *The Fleet at Flood Tide*. The papers include:
- Original draft manuscripts and notes
- Private correspondence
- Research Materials
- Oral histories and interview transcripts
- Publishing production materials
- Other archival materials, including recordings

This archive is one of the largest donations the Nimitz Education and Research Center has received. It is comprised of 38 linear feet and was presented in two parts. Each part had to be put in the Quarantine Room (a routine precaution) for a time before being placed with the rest of the Nimitz collection.

Processing will begin soon and should be completed sometime early next year. As a final step, a finding aid to assist researchers will be completed shortly thereafter. However, the collection is available for use by researchers now, and inquiries are welcome. To ask questions or gain access, researchers should contact Chris McDougal, 830-997-8600, ext. 264, or email cmcdougal@nimitzfoundation.org.

Hornfischer’s continuing support to the Museum over the years cannot be overstated as he has spoken at the Symposium series, holiday events and participated in many other activities. Chris McDougal, Archivist/Librarian, stated that "the value of the donation of Hornfischer’s personal archives is really inestimable because it provides current and future researchers with a rich body of material that complements and enhances our existing collections. It also provides insights into Hornfischer’s creative process." We are deeply appreciative.

In partnership with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Consulate General of Japan in Houston, the Education Department of the National Museum of the Pacific War is proud to announce the selection of six Gillespie County high school students to participate in “Japan’s Friendship Ties Program.” In March 2018, the students will use their spring break to travel with Museum Director Joe Cavanaugh and Public Programs Coordinator Barbara Ford to Japan as part of the KAKEHASHI Project. The goal of the project is to encourage an understanding of Japan’s economy, society, history, diverse culture, and politics. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hopes to promote mutual trust and understanding among the people of Japan and the United States to build a basis for future friendship and cooperation.

Our Museum was honored to be selected to participate and recruit students this year. It is particularly meaningful to bring young adults from the hometown of Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz to see Hiroshima, the Togo Shrine, and other places pertinent to better understanding the impact of WWII on Japan.

High school students from Harper High School, Fredericksburg High School, Heritage School, and Our Lady of the Hills were asked to submit three teacher recommendations and write an essay explaining why learning more about Japanese history and culture is important to America’s future. The process was highly competitive with a total of 35 students applying. In mid-March, the six students and museum staff will fly directly from Houston to Tokyo’s Narita Airport.

The participants will spend nine days in country, and their agenda includes a visit to the Diet Building, Imperial Palace, and Hiroshima. They will also experience traditional Japanese culture through a tea ceremony, Japanese Drums and Dance, and sushi making. The highlight will be an overnight stay with a Japanese family to experience “everyday” life, hopefully coming away with an attachment on both sides. In the coming months, the students will spend time learning the Japanese language and etiquette to prepare themselves for their trip abroad.
Heroes are Standing By: The Pacific Medals of Honor
“Semper Paratus” at Guadalcanal: Signalman First Class Douglas A. Munro, USCG

by Kent Knudson

An angry Marine Lt. Col. Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller declared “you’re not going to throw these men away!” as he turned and stormed out of a staff meeting attempting to decide what to do about his Marines trapped on the west side of Guadalcanal’s Matanikau River in the Solomon Islands. Puller was in command of the 7th Marine Regiment which had arrived on the island on 18 September 1942.

Marine Major General Alexander Vandegrift had hoped to follow up the initial 7 August 1942 landings and the successful defense of Edson’s (Bloody) Ridge with an expansion of his defensive positions towards the Matanikau. He authorized the use of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 7th Marines along with the 1st Raider Battalion in an attempt to advance this western perimeter. 1st Battalion, 7th Marines would embark on 27 September 1942 via Higgins boats from Lunga Point Base (which handled small boat operations on the island). They unknowingly landed on the beach west of Point Cruz between two Japanese positions and soon became engaged in what would become known as the Second Battle of the Matanikau.

The plan unraveled quickly as surrounding Japanese forces ambushed and cut the Marines off from the landing beaches, leaving them stranded inland on a ridge called Hill 84. A SBD Dauntless flying from Henderson Field saw the message “H-E-L-P” formed by white undershirts and radioed the command.

After abruptly leaving his meeting, Puller headed for the beach and with the aid of a signalman, hailed the destroyer USS Monssen and embarked on the ship. Meanwhile, Signalman First Class Douglas Albert Munro, USCG, who had been in charge of the landing craft that took the Marines to the Point Cruz landing site, had heard about the Marines’ predicament and was quickly readying his boats to go and bring them back.

Douglas Munro was born on 11 October 1919 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. His father, James Munro, was from California and his mother, Edith Thrower Fairey, was from Liverpool, England. Three years later, the family moved to Vancouver, Washington and he grew up in the small town of Cle Elum, Washington, graduating from high school in 1937. He attended the Central Washington College of Education (now Central Washington University) for a year before enlisting in the United States Coast Guard in September 1939.

Munro had risen rapidly through the ranks, volunteering to serve on the USCG cutter Spencer, earning his rating and later seeking and receiving assignment to the transport Hunter Liggett (APA-14). The Coast Guard manned not only four transport ships during the war, but served in mixed crews aboard numerous naval vessels and handled small amphibious craft along the entire island-hopping campaign of the Central Pacific. During the Guadalcanal Campaign, Munro had been involved with assisting various ships as part of the staff of Commander, Transport Division Seventeen; had already risked enemy gunfire off Savo Island attempting to rescue a Navy dive-bomber crew; and aided in the initial landings on Tulagi Island.

Off Point Cruz aboard the Monssen, Puller ordered his 500 beleaguered Marines to fight back to the coast as he personally directed a covering naval barrage from the ship offshore. Fighting for their lives, the Marines neared the beach and established a tight defensive ring to wait for the boats.

Munro had volunteered to lead his flotilla of boats back to the original landing beach. As he led the ten slow craft on their approach, they began to take on concentrated arms fire from the Japanese on the ridges ashore. Signaling the other boats to land in waves, he maneuvered his boat to draw the enemy’s fire and provide covering fire from one of its two small .30-caliber Lewis machine guns as they re-embarked the Marines. Every second counted in the intense Japanese assault.

SM1c Munro had been courageously exposing himself to increasing enemy fire to protect the boat crews and Marines, especially when he interposed his own craft as a shield between the remaining Marines on the beachhead and the enemy. Munro knew that this became especially critical as he would have to cover the last men out in the evacuation. After the majority of the Marines had embarked, Munro spied a transport that had stranded on a beach. Ray Evans had enlisted in the Coast Guard at the same time Munro had in Seattle and was manning the same boat. After rescuing the stranded craft, Evans spotted water spouts on the sea surface from gunfire coming towards them and attempted to warn Munro. The roar of the boat engine drowned out his shouts, and Munro was fatally wounded. He was conscious long enough to utter what would be his final words: “Did they get off?” All the Marines, including 25 wounded, escaped.

Munro was the only Coast Guard recipient of the Medal of Honor in its history. His citation reads: “By his outstanding leadership, expert planning, and dauntless devotion to duty, he and his courageous comrades undoubtedly saved the lives of many who otherwise would have perished.” Munro continues to epitomize and inspire the quality of selfless service in today’s Coast Guard as reflected in its motto:

“Semper Paratus: Always Ready!”
Meet Rorie Cartier, New Assistant Development Director-Membership

As the new Assistant Development Director-Membership, my role is to expand the Museum’s membership, as well as to make every member a close part of the Admiral Nimitz Foundation family. I will also be taking over the Sons and Daughters of World War II Veterans genealogy society, and I look forward to helping families research and honor loved ones. Originally from New Orleans, Louisiana, I moved to Fredericksburg with my wife Erin and our three dogs to accept my current position.

My interest in WWII is twofold: my grandfather, Billy V. Guess, was a WWII veteran, Battle of the Bulge survivor, and part of the occupation forces in Germany. The other spark to my interest comes from travels throughout Eastern Europe and seeing the effects of the war still visible today.

My educational background includes Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a Master’s degree from the Universiteit van Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and my doctorate from Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin. My studies focused on Soviet and Eastern Europe during the 1920s-90s. I have spent the past few years working as a teaching assistant and lecturer at the university level and in the membership department of the National WWII Museum in New Orleans.

Museum Stores:
Books by Symposium Speakers on POWs and Internees

As Good as Dead: During Escape of American POWs from a Japanese Death Camp
by Stephen L. Moore; $27

Accused American War Criminal
by Fiske Hanley, II; $35

Surviving the Rising Sun - My Family’s Years in a Japanese POW Camp
by Liz Irvine; $32.95

Presumed Lost—The Incredible Ordeal of America’s Submarine POWs during the Pacific War
by Stephen L. Moore; $37.95

Hell Under the Rising Sun: Texan POWs and the Building of the Burma-Thailand Death Railway
by Kelly Crager; $29.95

Nazi Prisoners of War in America
by Arnold Krammer; $29.95

Foundation Members Receive a 15% Discount

TO ORDER: Call 830-997-8600, x252
ON-LINE: https://store.pacificwarmuseum.org
Shipping and TX Taxes Extra
A Daughter’s Memories of her Father
As He is Honored with a Plaque on the Memorial Wall

During plaque ceremony honoring Lt. George Rowe, Jr. who served on the USS Birmingham, his second oldest daughter, Katharine Rowe, read a poignant and loving tribute to the man she and her family called “Pop.” The following gives key excerpts from her presentation:

Pop was a water person. Although his father was in the Army in WWI, Pop could not have been anything but Navy. Most people have 60% water in their body, I’m told. I’d say Pop was 75% - maybe 73% in the evening after a Jack Daniels or two. Long, long after the Navy, he loved the ocean, the waves, the salt, the swimming. He loved storms, sailing, the wind, taut sails, tiller in hand and heeling way over. His favorite color was blue and favorite bird the loon, a water bird. of course. Pop grew up on the banks of the Hudson River in Ossining, New York. In college, he was on the Yale swim team.

While we knew Pop, of course, only after his Navy career had ended, there were steady connections to it threading his entire life – the monthly Proceedings magazine on the front hall desk with the rest of the mail, the model of the Birmingham in the front room, and the books about the Leyte Gulf battle, for example. Indeed each Christmas, a Smithfield Ham was delivered, sent by a man who served with Pop on the Birmingham and believed Pop had saved his life the day the Princeton blew up.

I only later came to realize the significance of that day - October 24, 1944 - when 237 men on the Birmingham decks died almost immediately, and 426 were wounded from flying shrapnel from the Princeton explosion. Half the entire crew of the Birmingham was affected. The ship was on a rescue mission. It had come alongside the burning Princeton at least twice to try to put out the fires and pick up those who were in the water around it. Those who had died were firefighters spraying the fires on the Princeton and antiaircraft gunners who were trying to keep the Japanese planes away from the ship while they rescued the men from it. Pop was not injured. Although he was on deck, he had just stepped into the pilot’s house and was protected from the explosion.

While Pop did not talk much about specific warfare experiences, and declined to go to films about the war saying he had lived through it, he did talk about the Birmingham and Princeton and sailing through a typhoon, and we always knew that his experiences in the Navy were among the most important of his life.

I know Pop would love to know that his contribution to the war and his time in the Navy will be recorded here in this wonderful museum.

Katharine Rowe

Reminder:

2018 Nimitz Jr. Corps Programs:

-- 20 January: Anchors Aweigh: Learn about the Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, and Marines of WWII.


Join the Legacy Society!

To learn about our Legacy Society which helps ensure the future of the National Museum of the Pacific War, please contact Marty Kaderli 830-997-8600, x204 or kaderli@NimitzFoundation.org.
Our Partnership with the Texas Historical Commission: Working together by agreement as a state agency and a non-profit organization, the THC and Admiral Nimitz Foundation formed a new public/private partnership created to preserve the historic resources of the National Museum of the Pacific War and guide the expansion of the Museum. It is the only institution in the continental United States dedicated exclusively to telling the story of the Pacific Theater battles of World War II.
The Admiral Nimitz Foundation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit foundation eligible for corporate matching grants. Foundation members may forward any forms for matching gift programs with their membership contributions.

The Admiral Nimitz Foundation
328 E. Main St. • Fredericksburg, TX 78624

The Admiral Nimitz Foundation was recently rated Four Star by Charity Navigator -- the leading independent evaluator of non-profit charities in the U.S. A Four Star rating shows exceptional managerial efficiency exceeding industry standard.

Enjoying Veterans’ Day!

Newt Zanes of Walla Walla, Washington (left) and Sam Sorenson of Fredericksburg visit with one another after the Veterans’ Day Program. Zanes, a Marine, is a veteran of WWII and Korea, while 101-year-old Sorenson served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed on the USS Halsey during WWII.