

VETERAN'S CORNER

Memorial Day is Reminder of Sacrifices Made by Military Members

WRITTEN BY: DALE POTTS WITH INPUT FROM YVONNE ADDINGTON

The recent Memorial Day commemoration gives us all pause to reflect on Tualatin's deceased military members. There is no question that every veteran is a hero and their service should never be forgotten. But this column reviews three who served in major wars – in three branches of service - Army in WWII, Navy in Vietnam, and Marines in the current Gulf War conflict.



Al Turner

The first, **Al Turner**, was an Army medic who, at age 22, survived the historic WWII D-Day landing on Normandy Beach only to become a POW. He had rigorous training for two years in England prior to the landing, where he hiked 27 miles, with a full pack, two days a week, and 35 miles on Sunday. Assigned to the Medical Detachment, 121st Combat Engineer Battalion, 121st Infantry Division, he advanced from a medical aid man to surgical

technician. His physical conditioning and medic status were significant factors that kept him alive.

Al said he did not remember how he got from his landing craft to the shore, waking up on the beach, nearly deaf, dazed and disorientated. He said the movie "Saving Private Ryan" had accurate descriptions of the landing scene but the rest of the movie was "strictly Hollywood". After joining his unit, he woke up the next morning with German pointing a gun at his face. He believes the only reason he wasn't shot is because he was a medic.

While being marched back into France without being fed, American Air Forces strafed everything that moved, killing half the men captured with him. After several prison camps, he was sent to help an allied prisoner hospital in Rennes, France, staffed by French doctors and nurses. He said food was better there than prison camp – a cup of boiled potatoes and a slice of dark bread each day. "Everyone was hungry all the time". When repatriated, most of the prisoners had not had their clothes or

shoes off since D-Day, so they were "deloused, fed, given clean clothes ...interrogated, and signed a paper that said we would not tell anyone where we had been or what we had done."

Al passed away on Dec 19, 2011 at the age of 90. Known for his broad smile and easy going personality, he was responsible for several businesses along I-5 deciding to display large American flags. Among his many honors was his induction into the Oregon Military Hall of Fame. He was selected as "Mr. VFW", a statewide honor in 2005. He served as Commander of Post 3452 for six years and then as Quartermaster for five years. The Tualatin City Council proclaimed his as "Mr. Patriot" on May 26, 2009.



Brian Bushnell

Forty years later, a request from the National League of POW/ MIA families stirred interest in the community about him, led by Yvonne Addington. She found that after training, Brian became an air crewman on an AE2A Hawkeye. At age 21, while aboard the aircraft carrier USS Coral Sea, as part of a Seventh Fleet Carrier Strike Force, his plane was launched for a routine mission over Viet Nam. Almost immediately, the crew reported a fire and intention to return to the carrier. They crashed in the ocean, about three miles ahead of the carrier. A rescue helicopter and escort destroyer was on the scene within minutes but no survivors were seen or recovered. He was first reported as MIA, Missing in Action and then KIA, Killed in Action.

The second is **Brian Bushnell**. After attending Tualatin Elementary School and graduating from Tigard High School in 1968. (At that time, Tualatin's population numbered in the hundreds and the local high school was in Tigard.) After joining the Navy, he was never heard of again by most of former friends and classmates. Most figured he had found work elsewhere or maybe gotten married and moved on. His parents and brother moved away from Tualatin about that time.

Yvonne was able to provide the League with their requested information and a picture in uniform that Brian was proud of. To honor Brian, Tualatin City Council declared a day in Brian's name. The Heritage Center has bricks with his information and Tualatin VFW has a plaque for him. Historical markers are at Willamette National Cemetery and also the Vietnam Memorial at Portland's Washington Park.



Matthew Lembke

Matthew received extensive medical care but died at age 22 on July 10, from infections which could have been affected by debris in the blast. He was part of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, based out of Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

Matthew graduated from Tualatin High in 2005. A defensive end, he got his nickname "Lumpe" from a football coach. He was known for his cheerfulness, caring attitude and desire to excel. His memorial service was held on July 20 at Resurrection Catholic Church in Tualatin, followed by interment with full military honors at Willamette National Cemetery. The Tualatin VFW was moving into new quarters in 2009 and dedicated their new facility on Aug 26, 2009 to Matthew – Cpl Matthew Lembke Hall. The post felt that naming the hall after Matthew would remind people of the sacrifices that our military make every day all over the world.

The annual Regatta Run, which benefits the Corporal Matthew Lembke Memorial Scholarship Fund, is held to remember Matt. Marines travel from Hawaii and other parts of USA to participate in this 5K run/walk. The 2011 event provided six \$2,500 college scholarships, totaling \$15,000 to high school graduates in Tualatin. The 2012 Regatta run is scheduled for October 20th.



Dale G. Potts is a Navy Vietnam vet, serving as the Public Affairs Officer of the Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown. After active duty, he remained in the reserves, retiring as a Navy Captain (same rank as an Army Colonel). His civilian career was primarily as the Oregon Public Affairs Officer for IRS.

The third is **Matthew Lembke**, a former popular Tualatin High School football player. A scout sniper in the Marines, he was patrolling in the Taliban-heavy region of Now Zaid, Afghanistan on June 24, 2009 when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded. He lost both his legs and suffered heavy internal injuries. He was on his third Middle East tour of duty, after having served two times in Iraq. Matthew received