

# VETERAN'S CORNER

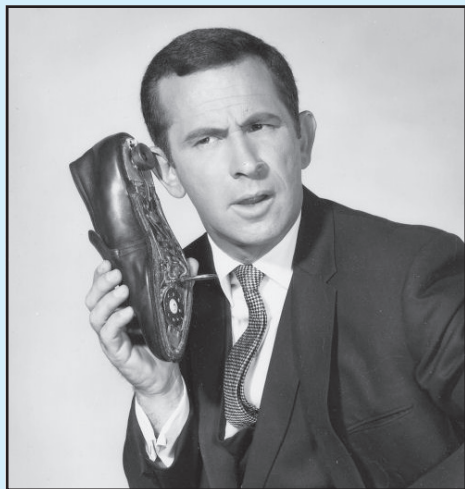
## Updates on "Fame" and "Wake Island" columns More on TV star Don Adams and "98" Rock

BY DALE POTTS

I have learned additional interesting details regarding stories in two previous Veterans Corner columns. One is the military background of Don Adams from the TV Series "Get Smart" that ran in the column covering four months of "fame" for the Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown. The other involves the coral rock marking the spot where 98 U.S. contractors were executed on Wake Island during WWII.

Don Adams joined the Marines in WWII at the age of 16, by lying about his age. He already dropped out of school and was working as a theatre usher. He participated in the Battle of Guadalcanal in the Pacific where he was shot and contracted Blackwater Fever, a serious form of malaria known for a 90% fatality rate. He was evacuated and then hospitalized for more than a year at the Naval Hospital in Wellington, New Zealand. After recovering, he returned stateside where he finished out the war as a drill instructor.

Following his discharge, he held a series of jobs. One, he said, was obtained by falsifying college credentials and an engineering background to be hired as an engineer designing underground sewers. His lack of training was not discovered for six months. He was born in New York to a father of Hungarian Jewish descent with the last name of Yarmy and mother of German and Irish Catholic ancestry. He used Adams as his stage name because casting calls were done in alphabetical order. He was raised as a Catholic and his brother as a Jew.



He enjoyed talking to Yorktown sailors during breaks, walking around the ship in his Navy Lieutenant kacki uniform. The crew had been briefed prior to shooting so everyone knew who he was, whether or not a Get Smart fan. He would walk up to a group of sailors and say in his characteristic short burst of speech "Knock off for the Day" or "Isn't this Navy stuff all bureaucratic baloney". Everyone laughed, his humor was appreciated.

### "98 Rock"

I was asked about the significance of the numbers 5-10 on the coral rock pictured in my Wake Island column, which marks the area where 98 American contractors were executed on Wake Island. The numbers are the date of execution. In both international and military dating systems, the number 5 is the fifth day of the month and the number 10 is the tenth month (October) of the year. Chiseled in the rock is "98 U.S.P.W. 5-10-43"; meaning "98 U.S. Prisoners of War, October 5, 1943". A plaque later mounted on the rock reads "The 98 rock inscribed by unknown POW" Historians say the date is two days off. According to Japanese records, the actual date was October 7, 1943.



These contractors had been retained by the Japanese to repair the Wake airfield damaged by fighting when the Japanese captured Wake Island. They had suffered two years of mistreatment as forced labor before marched blindfolded, with their arms bound behind them, into a trench on the beach where they were machine gunned.

The Japanese Base Commander, Admiral Sakaibara, had them executed after two days of blistering attacks from fighters off the USS Yorktown. Expecting a follow-up landing attempt, he issued the order, concerned that the contractors would rise up as a fifth column during the landing attack to help overcome their captors. They were part of the 1,150 contractors who been hired by Morrison-Knudsen Company, many from the Northwest, to build an airfield, seaplane base and submarine base and also to dredge a channel for U.S. submarine access. After marking the rock, the sole survivor was captured and beheaded the next day. Other contractors who survived the Japanese attacks were sent as POWs to China and Japan.

**Dale G. Potts** has organized and MC'd Tualatin's Memorial Day observation for the past 12 years. He 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. Contact Dale at [vet.dale@gmail.com](mailto:vet.dale@gmail.com).



Ensign Dale Potts

## Volunteer to Drive a Veteran

Within the veteran community, transportation is ranked right after housing as the most pressing issue which veterans face. You can volunteer to drive local veterans and their spouse to life-sustaining and life-enhancing activities through the Veterans Transportation program, coordinated by Ride Connection. This program matches vet requests for transportation with volunteer availability. Veterans need to call a week in advance for this coordination and are notified within two days of their event if a volunteer can assist.

Many of the volunteers are veterans themselves who enjoy sharing a laugh, a story, or an interaction with someone who has shared similar experiences. Drivers who use their own vehicle are reimbursed at \$0.56.5 a mile. There are vans available for volunteers to drive. This program is offered throughout the Tri-County area; Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas



Counties. . You are needed, even if you can only provide a few hours a week. As a volunteer driver, you are a lifeline as well as a champion, a confidant and a friend. To register as a volunteer driver, call (503) 528-1738 or email [teasterday@rideconnection.org](mailto:teasterday@rideconnection.org).

There is no charge to veterans for use this ride service. To register, veterans call the Ride Connections Service Center at (503) 226-0700.

## Free Saturday Yoga Warriors Class for Military Veterans

A special Yoga Warrior class for military veterans is being conducted every Saturday at Tualatin's Pohl Center by professional instructor Kate Dessommès. Her goal is to help heal the emotional wounds of war and to help bring about peace both internally and externally through the practice of yoga. Veterans with PTSD and also amputees are especially welcome. Because sponsored by Barhyte Specialty Foods, the classes are free to veterans. Advance registration is not needed because this is a drop in class.

Each week's class starts at 10:15am; providing an hour of low-impact physical exercise and stress reduction including muscle relaxation, breath work, imagery and meditation with fellow veterans. Mats and all other support items are provided for attendees. The Juanita Pohl Center is located on the Southeast corner of Tualatin's Community Park at 8513 SW Tualatin Road.

At strategic moments throughout the class, Kate has her veterans verbally repeat different affirmations. The Warrior pose is "I am a warrior with inner strength". The tree pose is "I grow from strong roots". The balance pose, while on hands and knees "I feel steady and calm". These work with the hypothalamus in the brain. The hypothalamus releases hormones related to post trauma, triggering the adrenal glands on top of the kidney to release cortisol which affects heightened states. These affirmations help neutralize negative thinking patterns resulting from traumatic experience.



Tualatin veteran Ken Clendenin says "being a former combat Marine with a purple heart (two tours in Vietnam), I have issues. This class is giving me a sense of wellbeing; mind, body and spirit." Another regular attendee, Bob Harper from Tigard says he feels better after each class. "I have less stress with the yoga and have been sleeping better. I was in the Navy (1965-69) and had three tours of duty in-country. I do have PTSD with what I have been through. Kate is great with us vets."