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Meet Real Life Heroes from "Band of Brothers" and "The Pacific" and Other Conflicts

We are honored to have with us at the 2010 Armed Forces **Appreciation** Day some of the real-life heroes from HBO's epic mini-series "Band of Brothers" and "The Pacific" as well as veterans of other major conflicts. This is a rare opportunity for you to meet these veterans and hear their stories at first hand. Here is a little information about some of the veterans who will be joining us.

R. V. Burgin (sponsored by CDPStucco.com/Chris & Andrea Perry)

As a Marine in World War II, R.V. Burgin fought with K-Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, on Cape Gloucester, Peleliu, and Okinawa, where he was awarded the Bronze Star. Burgin was the platoon sergeant featured in Eugene Sledge's classic book "With the Old Breed" and was recently portrayed by actor Martin McCann in the epic HBO mini-series The Pacific. Burgin is the author of "Islands of Damned: A Marine at War in



Click on the photo for a link to a wonderful video about Mr. Burgin.





the Pacific.”

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James Burke (sponsored by the Eglin Air Force Association)



As a Marine in World War II, Cpl. Jim Burke fought as a mortar man with K-Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, on Cape Gloucester, Peleliu, and Okinawa. Burke is a character in Eugene Sledge’s classic book “With the Old Breed,” where he is referred to by his nickname, “The Fatalist.” Burke is also featured in R.V. Burgin’s book, “Islands of Damned: A Marine at War in the Pacific.”

Buck Compton (sponsored by Wright Plaza)



Buck Compton was born in Los Angeles in 1921. While studying at UCLA from 1939 to 1943, he lettered on the football and baseball teams. Compton was on the UCLA team that played in the 1943 Rose Bowl. He participated in ROTC for four years then left his studies to attend Officers Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia, where he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in May 1943.

Compton joined Company E, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment in England in December 1943. He participated in all of 101st Airborne Division's major campaigns in the European Theatre of Operations. He received the Silver Star and Bronze Star awards for valor and the Purple Heart for being wounded in the line of duty.

Compton remained in the active reserves from 1946 to 1966 and retired as a Lt. Colonel. He completed a degree in law, and subsequently served as an LAPD detective, as a Deputy DA, and as Chief Deputy DA for LA County. In 1968, Compton handled the prosecution of Sirhan Sirhan for the assassination of Robert Kennedy. Governor Ronald Reagan appointed Compton as an Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal, a post from which he retired in 1990.



Click on Buck Compton's photo for an interesting video.



Bradford Freeman (sponsored by Magnolia Grill)



Bradford Freeman was born and raised in the lush Mississippi farmlands of Lowndes County, near Columbus. He was one of 8 children, 3 of whom fought in the war. After high school graduation he enrolled in Mississippi State University, which he attended for one semester before enlisting in the US Army on December 12, 1942.

He joined the paratroopers, following in the footsteps of his older brother, who became an officer in the 11th Airborne. Freeman was assigned to the 506th PIR., 101st Airborne at Alderbourne, England in February 1944. There, he trained under the watchful eye of mortar squad leader Don Malarkey and platoon leader Bill Guarnere, both of whom he describes as great fighting men.

On D-Day Freeman parachuted into Normandy in Malarkey's stick, forming up and fighting with Sgt. Chuck Grant until they joined the company near Brecourt Manor. Freeman vividly remembers the fierce fighting at Carentan, where he feels E-Company came together as a combat unit.

Magnolia Grill

Freeman participated in the invasion of Holland, and recalls endless patrols and "scary" night outpost duty on the banks of the Rhine.

Following Market Garden Freeman survived the brutal weather and constant shelling in the Bois Jacques woods at Bastogne only to be wounded by a "screaming mimi" (Nebelwerfer rocket) in Easy Company's attack on Foy. Following release from a hospital in England, Freeman joined up with HQ Staff in Berchtesgaden in April 1945, and later with his E-Company comrades in Kaprun, Austria.

After the war Brad Freeman went back to Mississippi State University for a semester, and then returned to help run a 197 acre family farm in Lowndes County. He later worked with the US Postal Service, retiring after 32 years of service.

Roy Gates (sponsored by LtCol Christopher Chennault Foltz, USAF 623rd AOC Hurlburt Field, FL)

Roy Gates joined the Army in May 1943, originally with the 10th Armored Division. Wanting to "get into the fight," he transferred to the 101st Airborne and went through jump training at Ft. Benning. In February 1945, he joined the "Band of Brothers" of Easy Company as a replacement officer while in Mourmelon, France. Following the surrender of Germany, Gates took full command of Easy Company's third platoon in Kaprun, Austria. He returned stateside in January 1946 and was honorably discharged soon after.

Ed Mauser (sponsored by Northwest Florida Regional Airport)

Easy Company's oldest surviving veteran, Ed Mauser began his military service at age 24, on January 15, 1942, when he was drafted shortly after Pearl Harbor. He joined the 101st Airborne at Ft. Bragg



and Easy Company's 2nd Platoon.

On D-Day, Mauser parachuted into the hedgerows of Normandy with Chalk #69. He landed alone before linking-up with Sgt. Robert "Burr" Smith outside the town of Vireville. They soon found themselves in a vicious firefight around a farm house near the town. Although assigned to a machine gun squad, Mauser served primarily as a rifleman throughout the war, trusting his M-1 from the initial fight on D-Day to the Alpine forests of Austria.

During Market Garden, Mauser was one of 23 E-Company men who participated in the famous mission to cross the Lower Rhine on the night of Oct. 22, 1944 to rescue 120 British paratrooper survivors of the 1st British Airborne Division after their battle at Arnhem.

Following Holland, Mauser made the truck ride to Bastogne, clad in his regular fatigues. He endured the "toughest" battle of the war, "thanks to good fortune and the brotherhood that was Easy Company." He reports being blessed by having a foxhole complex built by "someone who knew what he was doing." The sturdy structure with a roof saved his life. Mauser was wounded in the fighting around Noville, Belgium, and was sent to a hospital in France.

He rejoined Easy Company as it moved along the autobahn toward Hitler's alpine home in Berchtesgarden. Mauser spent his time there securing homes and farms and enjoying the beauty of the area in the absence of combat. Later, in Kaprun, Austria, Mauser was awarded the 85 points he had earned and shipped back to the states. On Sept. 17, 1945 he was discharged from the army in Chicago. Today, Mauser enjoys his retirement, proud of the fact that he is the oldest survivor of Easy Company at age 92.

Sponsored by Northwest Florida Regional Airport

Sergeant Earl McClung (sponsored by Edwin and Mary Watts)



Earl McClung was born on April 27, 1923 at the Colville Indian Reservation in Inchelium, Washington. While in his senior year of high school, on Feb 15, 1943, McClung was drafted into the U.S. Army. He underwent infantry basic training at Camp Walters, Texas, and volunteered for Airborne training at **Fort** Benning, Georgia.

McClung joined Company E, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, at **Fort** Bragg, North Carolina before shipping out to England. He participated in all of 101st Airborne Division's major campaigns in the European Theatre of Operations. He received two Bronze Star awards for valor and the Purple Heart for being wounded in the line of duty.

McClung left the service in 1947 and worked for the Postal Service, for 17 years. He then worked for 13-years as a game warden on the Collville Indian Reservation, a post from which he retired in 1988.



T. I. Miller



Thurman Miller is a writer and a veteran of Unit K-3-5 of the Marine Corps' First Marine Division. He fought on Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester in the South Pacific in World War II and taught at Officer Candidates' school. The HBO miniseries "The Pacific" is based in part on the story of K Company, his Marine Corps outfit. Following the war he worked for more than three decades in the coal mining industry in West Virginia.

Born in 1919, Miller has written extensively about his experiences growing up in rural Appalachia in the Roaring Twenties and the Depression, serving on Guadalcanal and New Britain, training future Marine Corps officers, and mining the coal that powered America's dramatic post-war economic expansion. He is the author of three books: War and Work, Coal Bloom, and Always Faithful, Always Free, all published by iUniverse. At the age of 90, he is still very active as a guest speaker on his wartime experiences as well as the development of the Appalachian coal fields. His recorded memories

reach back into the the 1920's and his extensive archives have proven an invaluable first-hand historical resource. He lives in Mt. Hope, WV.

Sid Phillips (sponsored by Beach Community Bank)

Sid Phillips enlisted in the USMC the day after Pearl Harbor because the Marines promised to put him "eyeball to eyeball" with the Japanese. Passing beneath the Golden Gate Bridge, he departed his land a nervous 17-year-old. Two years later, when he kissed the docks in San Diego, he had come home a hero. Together Sid and his brothers in the legendary 1st Marine Division won the first epic victory of the war, saved Australia, and stopped the Japanese juggernaut in the Pacific. Today, Sid and his sister, Katharine, have become internationally-known after their notable roles in Ken Burns'



documentary, The War, and the Tom Hanks/Steven Spielberg miniseries, The Pacific. Phillips is the author of "You'll Be Sor-ree! A Guadalcanal Marine Remembers the Pacific War."

Katharine Phillips Singer (sponsored by Beach Community Bank)



Click on Mrs. Singer's photo for a short video of her appearance on Ken Burns' "The War" on PBS.



Charles Womack



Katharine Phillips Singer, the older sister of Marine Sidney Phillips, and lifelong friend of Eugene B. Sledge, was a sophomore at Auburn when Pearl Harbor was attacked. She returned to Mobile after graduation in 1944 and regularly volunteered at the Red Cross Canteen at the railroad station, serving coffee and donuts to the men on troops trains as they passed through. She drove officers around town as a volunteer with the Red Cross motor pool as well, and corresponded frequently with all the boys she knew who were stationed overseas. She learned to cook without sugar, butter, and other essential ingredients, saved fat and tin cans, and followed the news of the war in the newsreels, on the radio, and in the Mobile Register, scanning the daily casualty lists for familiar names.

Mrs. Eugene B. (Jeanne) Sledge

Jeanne Sledge is the widow of Eugene B. Sledge, and will be accompanied by her son Henry.



Eugene B. Sledge in 1946



Click on Sid Phillips' photo for a video clip about his memories of the "Worst Part of Guadalcanal."



December 26, 1943 where he got his nickname "Red" for the bright red beard he grew during the campaign. Next, he landed on Peleliu on September 15, 1944 where he served as a flamethrower operator assigned to K-Company. After Peleliu he fought in the Battle of Okinawa on April 1, 1945. With the conclusion of the war, he returned to the United States arriving in San Diego in November, 1945 and to this day is amazed that he fought through three island campaigns and came home without a scratch!



Henry Sledge and Mrs. Eugene Sledge visited with Sid and Katharine Phillips Singer just before the Hollywood premiere of "Band of Brothers"