



**AVIS DARLENE MACON SINGLETARY-GRAVES AT VETERANS' CEMETERY IN ROCKY HILL, CONNECTICUT**

## VHP HELPS DAUGHTER FIND FATHER

By Eileen Hurst

The Veterans History Project (VHP) and the internet once again facilitated a reunion of sorts.

Willie James Macon, one of the veterans interviewed for the VHP served in the U.S. Army in a quartermaster regiment during WWII. Willie was proud of his service, driving a “deuce and a half” hauling supplies in the Philippines and shared his story with the VHP in 2004. Many years after the war, Willie moved to CT to help out an ailing sister, but when he became ill himself, he relied on the CT Veterans Home and Hospital in Rocky Hill to care for him. Willie resided first at the home and then at the hospital for over 25 years. Willie never forgot his daughter, Avis Darlene, who he had not seen since she was an infant, and for many years he tried unsuccessfully to find her. One of Willie’s dying wishes was to locate and meet his daughter. However, that was not to be. Willie died on September 6, 2005 and was buried at the veterans’ cemetery in Rocky Hill, CT.

At the same time Willie James Macon was searching for his daughter, Avis Darlene Macon Singletary-Graves was searching for her father. It took the Veterans History Project to bring them together. Avis, with very little information to go on, had been looking for years for her father. Not even knowing in which state he might reside, all leads turned into dead ends. Then, in 2009, she discovered from Ancestry.com that her dad had died in 2005. All hopes of ever knowing what her father looked like, sounded like or discovering what kind of man he was seemed to vanish. Avis now knew that she would never meet her father face to face, but she was still eager to learn any details she could about him.

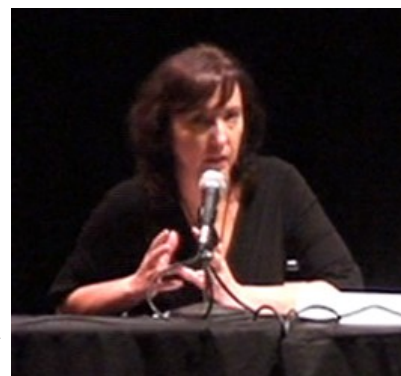
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## “LIONESSE” FEATURED AT CCSU WOMEN’S FILM FESTIVAL

On October 27th, the Women’s Film Festival at CCSU hosted a showing of the highly acclaimed documentary, “Lioness”, a film about women in combat during the Iraq War. Daria Sommers, co-producer and co-director of “Lioness”, was on hand to participate in the panel discussion following the film. Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Linda Schwartz and U.S. Navy veteran Heather Sandler, joined the panel to discuss women in today’s military. Several veterans and Veterans Affairs personnel were in attendance, citing *Lioness* as a valuable training tool for understanding the effects of combat on returning soldiers, both male and female alike.



**Daria Sommers, co-producer and co-director of *Lioness***

## VETERANS RELIVE WWII HISTORY

By Owen Rogers

On September 25, 2010, volunteers, veterans, and members of the CCSU Veterans History Project boarded the S.S. *John W. Brown*, which departed from Providence, Rhode Island for a six hour cruise along Narragansett Bay. The Bethlehem-Fairchild Shipyard of Baltimore, Maryland launched the *Brown* in 1942. Of the 2,571 Liberty ships launched during the war, only two remain operational.



During World War Two, Merchant Marines delivered vital supplies to embattled Allies, while the Navy Armed Guard manned defensive weaponry. The *John W. Brown* was a designated troop carrier that provided living quarters for 500 men. At the present, nearly 800 people climb aboard for the sold-out cruises. The voyage allows veterans a return to their wartime service for an afternoon, as well as an outlet for the appreciation of family, friends, and history enthusiasts.

Above the deck, dotted with historical re-enactors and spectators, a flight of vintage aircraft performed



low level flyovers. The thrilling display reinforced the theme of historical preservation and appreciation for a national past. Incredible maintenance efforts were surpassed only by a community appreciation for veterans, who arrived to collectively embrace their contribution to

### SPEAKER'S BUREAU OF WORLD WAR II VETERANS

World War II Army Air Force Veteran Jack Rodin spoke on September 13, 2010 at the Franam Organization in Newington, CT.

World War II Army veteran Frank Ladwig spoke at the Baltic, CT, Elementary School on November 8, 2010.

World War II Army Air Force veteran John Lubas will speak at the CARTUS Corporation In Danbury, CT, on November 9, 2010.

World War II Marine Corps veteran Ted Cummings will speak to the Civitans in Windsor, CT, on November 10, 2010.

VHP HELPS DAUGHTER FIND FATHER *continued from page 1*

Recently, while doing a Google search, Singletary-Graves was thrilled to discover her father's oral history interview on CCSU's VHP website. She was ecstatic to not only hear his voice for the first time, but to see photographs of the man she never knew and learn something of his life through his interview. Avis and her son, Saku, drove from Maryland to Connecticut in September to visit her father's grave, meet family members she previously did not know existed, and to meet the interviewer who had recorded her father's story. Avis and Saku then enjoyed a day at the Rocky Hill Veterans' Home and Hospital meeting many of the nurses, staff and patients who knew Willie. Although it was not the reunion Avis had dreamed of, her visit to Connecticut brought closure and expanded her family network.

### CCSU CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL

By Matthew Warshauer, PhD

On April 15-17, CCSU will mark the opening of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Civil War with a weekend commemoration kick-off event. Join us on campus to learn about and experience the amazing history of the war and Connecticut's involvement in it. There will be more than you thought imaginable.

The Commemoration kick-off will include a reenactor encampment, living history throughout the campus, presentations on a variety of Civil War topics, battle skirmishes, art and material culture exhibits, and more. There will also be a wide variety of Commemoration events occurring throughout the state once the kick off starts the Commemoration period.

Please see [www.ccsu.edu/civilwar](http://www.ccsu.edu/civilwar) to learn more.



## NEW VOLUNTEERS

As a military historian, David Ogan earned successive history degrees, beginning with a Bachelor's Degree from Temple University in Philadelphia, followed by a Masters Degree from Austin Peay State University in Clarkesville, TN. As a component of his Master's Thesis, "The Logistics of the 101st Airborne Division in the First Gulf War," he interviewed several veterans. These personal experiences strengthened his scholarship. David volunteered for the Veterans History Project in order to "indulge in his own love of history while providing a critical service to it."



A recent graduate of Central Connecticut State University, Jaclyn Nadeau became involved in the Veterans History Project due to her personal interest in military history. This connection spans two generations, as both her grandfather and father served in the United States armed forces. An "Army brat" herself, she realizes the sacrifice endured among both veterans and their families. As a result, she applies her scholarship towards veterans' oral histories, utilizing the Veterans History Project to preserve the efforts of Connecticut's military legacy.

## CONGRESSIONAL ARCHIVES REKINDLE MEMORIES OF VIETNAM SERVICE

By Owen Rogers



**Donald Perreault at Intelligence Headquarters, 2nd Field Force, Vietnam, 1969**

For Kenneth E. Lewis, a professor at Michigan State University, the Vietnam War had faded to distant memory. Recently, a Google search linked him to the Veterans History Project website, which contained the military records and photographs of Donald Perreault, the man whose tour he succeeded during the Vietnam War. Four decades prior, the United States Army deployed Lewis to the Republic of Vietnam as an intelligence officer for the Second Field Force-Vietnam. His Military Occupational Specialty included intelligence summaries. Looking back on company records, Lewis recognized several names among the hosted military records. Moreover, the photographs of day to day live at the "Plantation" returned him to a world that "he had largely forgotten over the past 40 years."

The documents recalled potent feelings. Out of contact with fellow veterans, the preservation efforts conducted by the Library of Congress and their archive partner, Central Connecticut State University, reassured him of his historic role. According to Lewis' own words, "To suddenly come across something like this was very unusual, but also very reassuring in the sense that knowing all of those things that happened in a faraway place a long time ago exist somewhere beyond my own memories."



## CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S "VETNET" RAISES AWARENESS OF FEMALE MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS



**Brigadier General Wilma Vaught,  
USAF (retired)**

The Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs recently established an outlet for female support. Of the 15,000 female Connecticut veterans, "VETNET" provides an awareness for both past and present contributions to the United States military.

Championed by Dr. Linda S. Schwartz, herself a retired U.S. Air Force Major, Connecticut VETNET will host a women veterans appreciation brunch at the Rocky Hill Marriot Hotel on November 14, 2010. Alongside the Commissioner, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, formerly of the United States Air Force, will be the Guest of Honor at the ceremony. Vaught is both the Founder and President of the National Women Veterans Memorial Foundation. As the VETNET expands its membership base, the services it provides to the veteran community will increase accordingly.

Currently, Connecticut veterans are able to register on VETNET via the CT Department of Veterans Affairs website: [www.ct.gov/ctva](http://www.ct.gov/ctva)

## AVON VFW POST SUPPORTS CCSU VETERANS

The Gildo T. Consolini VFW Post 3272 in Avon, Connecticut, contributed a generous donation to the Central Connecticut State University Student Veterans Scholarship, helping troops to further their own educations. The Avon veterans have shared a close relationship with the Veterans History Project at CCSU, with many members of their organization contributing their personal histories to both CCSU and the Library of Congress.

Offered in addition to the GI Bill, the Student Veterans Scholarship extends financial support to returning veterans. These funds help to purchase the books, housing, and travel expenses required to complete a university degree program. This community assistance allows veterans to fulfill their career aspirations following a successful tour in the military.

From veteran to veteran, the VFW soldiers have carried the torch to the most recent generation of returning troops, eager to fulfill their own educations in the chance that they too, may preserve the network of support for our fighting men and women.

Remember Your Heroes this Veterans Day

## CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY & SOCIAL RESEARCH AT CCSU

For more information or to participate please contact:

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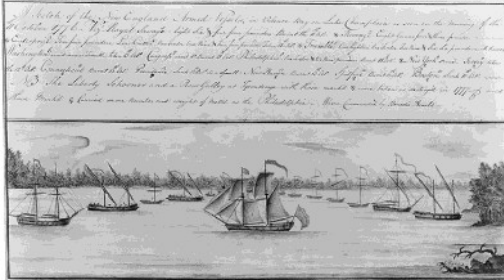
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# HISTORICAL FOCUS: THE USS CONNECTICUT AS A CORNERSTONE OF UNITED STATES HISTORY

By Owen Rogers

Throughout the history of the United States, warships have been christened with the name *Connecticut*. To date, six vessels have borne the title, with four vessels conveying their

Photo # NH 92864 "A Sketch of the New England Armed Vessels, in Valcour Bay ..." Artwork by C. Randle

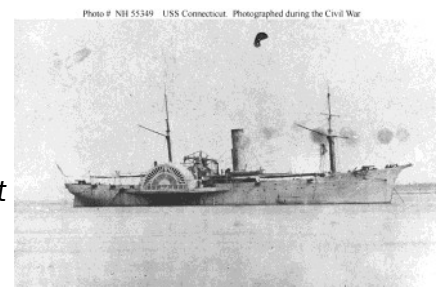


own

nanced tale that mirrors the political history of an aspiring nation.

From the early days of independence, the original USS *Connecticut* assisted a small armada of gunboats in the defense of Lake Champlain. The action

formed one of the seminal combat experiences of the recent United States Navy. Battling the world's premier naval power, the fleet suffered tremendous losses. Although most of the vessels were either scuttled, captured, or sunk by enemy action, the Navy had been "baptized by fire," and the *Connecticut* legacy would live on in subsequent vessels.



Following the secession of Southern States in 1861,



the USS *Connecticut*, now both steam and sail powered, once again turned its sights on the British. Enlisted as a blockade vessel, the *Connecticut* prevented English "blockade runners" from

resupplying the Confederate war efforts, strategically

undermining the potential of Southern ground forces. With two successful sea tours and six blockade runners either captured or

destroyed, the *Connecticut*

served a vital role in the reestablishment of the United States.

Commissioned in 1906, the first battleship to bear the name USS *Connecticut* reflected the expansionist desires of the early

twentieth century. The first of a series of six *Connecticut*-class



vessels, she led the "Great White Fleet" on a coal-fueled cruise lasting from Hampton Roads,

## IN MEMORIAM



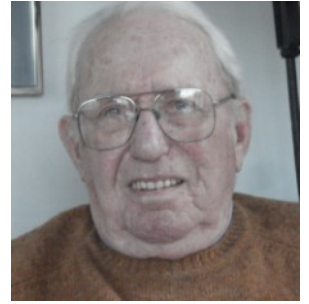
**John James Higgins, 90,** of Avon, CT, passed away on July 21, 2010. Higgins served his country from 1940-1976 as a member of the United States Army and Connecticut National Guard. From the defense of the Philippines at the onset of the Second World War,

the campaign for the island of Guadalcanal, then on to the Cold War frontline of West Germany, Higgins dedicated himself to the defense of his country. He was attuned to historical events surrounding him, which prompted the publication of his manuscript, "The History of the 1st Connecticut Infantry Regiment," in



**Kuehn, Edward R., 94,** of South Windsor, CT, passed away on October 23, 2010. Kuehn served as a Captain in the 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One) during World War II. As a UConn student, Kuehn enlisted in the ROTC program, and became activated several months prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. As

part of the first wave of United States soldiers deployed overseas, his military service carried him through nearly every European campaign of the war. For admirable service throughout North Africa, Tunisia, and Sicily, Kuehn was promoted to commander of "K" company, 18th Infantry—the only combat unit of any branch to



**Alfred Richard Metzger, 90,** of Essex, CT passed away on September 9, 2010. He retired from the United States Navy as a decorated Lieutenant Commander, a veteran of seven war patrols aboard the USS *Hake* (SS-256). On February 1, 1944, Metzger distinguished himself as an acting Officer of the Deck. In a surprise attack, the USS *Hake* sank both the Japanese army cargo ship *Nanka Maru* as well as the transport ship *Tacoma Maru*, totaling 20, 405 tons. During this patrol, a subsequent ambush damaged another Japanese ship of 6,000 tons. For materially assisting in these coordinated attacks, Metzger received a citation

**Kilgore, Charles F., 90,** of Avon, CT, passed away on October 27, 2010. He was a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War, serving in the 29th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army.



He enlisted as a National Guardsman in 1937 and became assigned to active duty status on January 1, 1940. Assigned to the Heavy Weapons Company, the army trained him to use machine guns and mortars. He attended Officer Candidate School and achieved the rank of 1st Lieutenant and then was reassigned to the Army Air Force. Invested in a research project regarding the B-24 "Liberator" bomber, Kilgore investigated a design error in the B-24 layout that allowed waist gunners a sufficient degree of deflection to shoot their own wing-tips. Corrections made, he reported to Foggia, Italy, where he managed ordnance at an Air Force