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Veteran J.B. Mills and a local scout participate in a VJ Day ceremony at Bare Cove Park on August 15 to honor the day the Japanese surrendered during World War II. J.B. Mills had many friends stationed at the Annex during the war.

Annex Veterans Are Fading Away

By Jim Rose, FOW News Editor and Historian

With the 65th anniversary marking the end of World War II on September 2 and Veteran's Day coming up on November 11th, I thought it fitting to share with readers some history of recently deceased veterans who worked at the Annex.

I first started contacting former ammunition depot employees in 2001. I managed to reach 37 of them. With 2010 drawing to a close, 13 have passed on in those nine years.

The experience reminds me of Agatha Christie's detective novel "Ten Little Indians" with the characters gradually dying off... "and then there were nine," so on down the line.

I'll begin alphabetically with **Allan Andrews**. Since I started the Annex reunions in 2002, I could never persuade Andrews to join us. He was an Army veteran who served in the European Theater during World War II. After the war Andrews packed shells at the Mainside (Bare Cove Park). His son Jimmy has made valuable contributions of photos and artifacts of the ammunition depot to the Bare Cove Park exhibit dock house. Died June 17, 2010 at the age of 88.

Tim Bailey was another Annex veteran I was unable to bring to our reunions. The

reason: he had to care for his invalid wife. I thought once she passes on, maybe Tim could join us. But, he died first. Bailey was a brakeman for the ammunition depot and served in the Army during the occupation of Japan after the war. Died July 18, 2010 at the age of 82.

George Bartlett was one of my first contacts starting in 2002. He always carried a smile and would faithfully show up at the reunions. He was an Army veteran who was stationed at coastal artillery batteries from Marshfield to Nahant, Massachusetts. Bartlett was an observer and reported sighting a German U-boat off Marshfield in 1943 (it escaped). His most memorable event besides locating the sub was the test firing of the 16-inch guns at Fort Duvall, now Spinnaker Island in Hull. The huge guns managed to break all the windows in the neighborhood. The guns were nicknamed "Big Ben" and "Big Tom." The Army never fired the guns after that shattering experience.

After the war, Bartlett worked at the Annex as an Ordnanceman and guard. Died November 2, 2009 at the age of 87.

Tom Beary was a B-17 radio operator and gunner for the Eighth Air Force during World War II. His most near death ex-

perience occurred on a mission over Germany when he left his seat to drop metal chaff out of the bomb bay doors (chaff confuses the enemy radar). As he returned to his station, he found a jagged, gaping hole in the airplane where his seat was. He picked up the anti-aircraft shrapnel on the floor and later had it framed. It's still hanging on his wife's living room wall along with his air medals. Beary's battle-scarred B-17 was famous enough to be featured on one of our nation's postage stamps. It also appears on the front cover of the book "The Mighty Eighth" by Gerald Astor.

Beary worked as an inspector and Ordnanceman at the Annex after the war. Died February 21, 2008 at the age of 83.

Another colorful veteran was **John Bibbo**. He served as a Seaman Second Class for the Navy while on duty in the Pacific.

Both ships he sailed on, the USS Princeton and the USS DeHaven, were sunk by enemy fire. He was wounded and decorated for his bravery.

The deadly encounters didn't end there. After the war while working at the Annex as an Ordnanceman, he witnessed a mine explosion at the Hanover plant that killed

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Annex veterans are fading away (continued from page one).

one worker and injured 15 others.

Besides the blood and guts of his life, John was an excellent golfer and scored three holes-in-one during his tour of the links. He knew golf legend Gary Player. Died August 12, 2009 at the age of 84.

George Clark served in the Army and the Navy Seabees during the World War II era. During his Army stint, George performed as honor guard for actress Shirley Temple, aviator Amelia Earhart and the first commercial Trans-Pacific seaplane "Yankee Clipper." Clark received the Bronze Star medal for his heroism in the Pacific campaign. While at the ammunition depot, he worked as a welder. Died May 20, 2010 at the age of 94.

Henry Donahue was a crane operator at the Annex and the Boston Navy Yard. While in the Navy, he was wounded and decorated for his action serving in the Pacific during World War II.

After Donahue retired from federal service, he became a real estate mogul. At one Annex reunion lunch, he picked up the tab and said, "It's my tab because I'm worth 30 million bucks. God's been good to me. I'll gladly take care of our bill." Died April 16, 2007 at the age of 80.

It was a lucky day when **George Dwyer** showed up at one of the Annex reunions (he died two months later). He cleared up some misconceptions about the atomic bomb stored at the Annex. Many park patrons have heard the legend of the nuclear weapon that destroyed Hiroshima, Japan was stored at Bunker N9. Dwyer said, "It wasn't the atomic bomb or parts of it that bombed Japan that was stored there. It was a nuclear depth charge (RUR-5 ASROC) that Rebel Vaughan (ordnance supervisor) and myself were in charge of." Dwyer also worked at Building 80 when it produced land mines during the Vietnam War. He was an Army veteran and pilot. After the war, he built and flew his own airplane. Died December 9, 2004 at the age of 78.

Jim Larsh was an inspector at the Annex. He was witness to a fuse explosion at the the Mine Anchor Building in 1953 that injured one worker. Jim served with the Navy in the late 40s.

Larsh was part Native American. He and I travelled together to the Plymouth Plantation one summer to see what it was all about. Larsh regaled the pilgrim actors with some history on his Chippawa tribe. Died June 1, 2009 at the age of 80.

Dave Lovell saw a variety of action during World War II. He participated in the D-Day invasion, Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge as a

communication specialist for the 101st Airborne Division.

His mission during D-Day was to jump into Normandy, France on June 6, 1944 toting carrier pigeons for backup in case his radio didn't work. Although his parachute was shredded with bullet holes, he and his pigeons survived unharmed and his radio worked. However, his division suffered 40 percent casualties that day.

During Operation Market Garden in Holland on September 17, 1944, Lovell defended a vital road intersection with a machine gun. Operation Market Garden was the failed Allied attempt to surround the Germans in the Ruhr Valley and bring the war to a quick end. The battle was later made famous by the film "A Bridge Too Far" starring Robert Redford.

At the Battle of the Bulge of December 1944, Lovell was there when the Germans presented to the 101st Airborne Division's General McAuliffe the ultimatum to surrender at Bastogne, Belgium.

Although the GIs were surrounded for five days, McAuliffe gave his famous "Nuts" reply to the waiting German party. I asked Lovell, "What did the German faces look like when they heard the general's strange reply?" He responded, "Incredulous! We explained to them it meant to 'go to Hell!'" General Patton's Fourth Armored Division eventually came to the rescue several days later. The German 70-mile wide bulge was later pushed back by the end of January, ending the bloodiest battle of World War II.

Lovell worked for the Transportation Department at the Annex and Mainside and served as president for the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans in Weymouth after the war. Died April 30, 2009 at the age of 85.

Louise Mable assembled detonators and rockets at the Annex during World War II. She also worked at the Hingham Shipyard as a welder and was featured in a movie of the shipyard by WGBH. Died December 3, 2008 at the age of 89.

Leo Parenti is the most important of the departed thirteen. None of the Annex reunions would have been possible without him. Leo put me in touch with most of the former workers. I met him through park director Steve Gammon.

Leo saw action in Europe as a truck driver and artilleryman for the the 26th Yankee Division. His experiences of war were comical as well as tragic.

On the light side, Leo would heat cans of beans on the manifold of his truck. One day one of them exploded. He ducked for cover, fearing he hit a land mine. After

discovering the exploded can, he was re-leaved but with a messy engine. Leo said, "I always did like refried beans."

During the Battle of the Bulge Parenti was blown out of his foxhole while eating a porkchop. When the shelling stopped, he wiped the mud off the meat and continued eating his juicy morsel. After the war, he claimed and received a disability check for the shelling... saying the bombardment gave him nightmares...more likely it was the U.S. Army pork chop.

During a USO show he met actor Mickey Rooney. He had a few drinks with Rooney after the show. Parenti said, "Rooney could throw them down like a pro but ended up three sheets to the wind when I drank with him. We downed a bottle of brandy together."

On the dark side, Parenti and his division liberated a concentration camp at Gusen, Germany. Parenti captured an SS Major who was later executed for war crimes.

During one convoy mission carrying a load of ammo, Parenti was strafed and bombed by a German plane. He fired at it with his machine gun but the plane dropped its bomb and flew off. The truck ahead of him was blown up and the driver was killed. Unfortunately, the Army sent news to Leo's parents that Parenti was the one killed. Leo shocked his parents at the end of the war when he came through the family's front door and said, "Hey mom and dad, I'm home!"

After the war, Leo worked at the Annex in transportation and later at the park as a laborer and assistant supervisor. Died January 9, 2007 at the age of 89.

Dave Sturgis was a former Marine guard at the ammunition depot. Sturgis saw action in the Korean War. He said his most memorable event there was when he walked on a frozen minefield while laying communication wire. Luckily, none of the mines exploded. He said, "I wondered then, 'why were the South Korean soldiers waving their arms at me and yelling jibberish?' It was 'stop!' in Korean."

He also said the Marines would fill their walkie-talkies up with booze to take the chill out of the frigid Korean air.

I'll always remember Dave saying with a sparkle in his eye, "Once a Marine, always a Marine, Semper Fi!" Died December 27, 2004 at the age of 72.

That wraps it up. The clock struck thirteen. It's matter of time before we'll say, "Once there were 37. Now there are none."

But life goes on. We must cherish and preserve their legacy of devotion, sacrifice and achievement, and learn from it. ■