

# Mil I Town Messenger

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Volume 4, Issue 2 — May 2010

## From the President's Pen ~ Cathryn Baird

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." ~ Thomas Paine, Common Sense, 1776

This is my third term as president of the Newport Historical Society, and I am honored to serve our community by working with a dedicated group of historic-minded individuals who wish to preserve and highlight local history. Our active membership is small, but our commitment to the preservation and memories of Newport's heritage remains strong. Throughout history many Newport citizens have made many sacrifices, including that of their very lives, for the public good while serving in our country's military. In the space allowed in this May issue of our newsletter we wish to pay tribute to a few who did not "shrink from service." Their dedication to our country and their personal sacrifice in no small way contributes to our freedom and pursuit of happiness. To the men mentioned here, and to all Newport residents who have served in the military, we offer "the love and thanks of man and woman."

Please contact President Baird for information about joining the Historical Society:  
603.863.5089 ~ [freewillfarm@comcast.net](mailto:freewillfarm@comcast.net)



## Specialist Justin A. Rollins

Dakota Sargent



On March 5, 2007 Specialist Justin A. Rollins, assistant machine gunner, was killed by a roadside bomb in the town of Samarra, Iraq. Justin was a smart kid. Whenever he had picked up a weapon he easily learned how to use it. At four years old his father Skip Rollins showed his son how to fire an empty sturdy rifle. Justin was also a very patriotic person, and loved his country. Justin knew it was wrong for so many people to be killed when

the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001, and he knew he had to fight for his country. Justin joined the military and became part of the 82nd Airborne Division of the Charlie Company. When he returned from training at Fort Bragg, his Dad said he did not recognize him because of how much he had grown up while away. When Justin heard he was being deployed, he and his Dad went to a Red Sox game on June 24, 2006. He met David Ortiz who signed a baseball for him. During the game Justin turned to his father and said "If David Ortiz hits a home run I can die in Iraq a happy man." Ortiz was broken up after hearing of Justin's death. He sent a signed T-shirt to Justin's parents and said it was an honor to meet Justin and that he

would be with him in his prayers. When a reporter from MLB.com asked David if he had any news, David told him about Justin. Justin's family received pictures of a litter of puppies that he had found in Iraq. Justin had wanted to bring one home. The Rollins family contacted Congressman Paul Hodes to see if he could help them bring one of the dogs home. After months of negotiation they succeeded, and named the dog Hero, because Justin's parents know Justin was a hero.

Justin requested that he be buried in Arlington Cemetery. He said there was no higher honor than that. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on March 19, 2007.

## Please join us! NHS Monthly Meetings

Second Monday of  
the Month

Sugar River Bank  
Community Room

~ ~ ~

7:00 pm

May 10

June 14

July 12

August 9

September 13

~ ~ ~

Cathryn Baird  
President

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Jackie Cote  
Treasurer

Mary Lou McGuire  
Secretary

## The Inside Scoop

- Army Specialist-4 Mike Brady
- Pier Bridge Update
- World War II Argus Champion Articles
- Newport Notables: Captain Ira Stowell

## Ar my Special ist-4 Mike br ady

larry cote

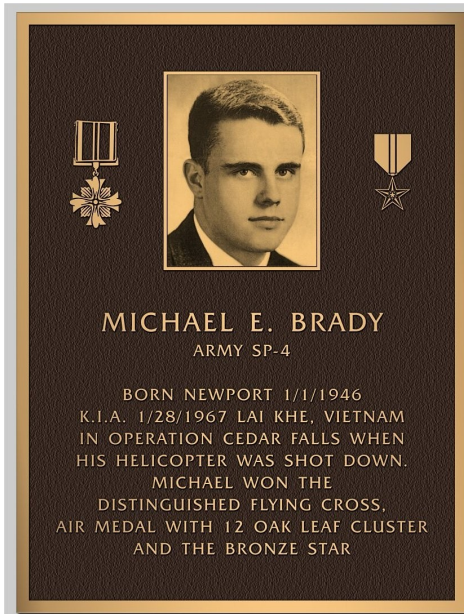
Who was Army Specialist-4 Michael E. Brady? In the latter 1950's and early 1960's Mike lived on the corner of Oak and Middle Streets, just two houses east of the Oak Street Bridge. He died a hero in Vietnam on January 28, 1967 at the age of 21. While crew chief on a helicopter taking part in operation Cedar Falls, his helicopter was shot down during a re-supply of the ground troops. For his actions in the service of his country, Mike earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 12 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Bronze Star.

This summer Mike would have celebrated the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his graduation from Towle (Newport) High School. Mike was a star on the football field. While not blessed with giant stature, he made up for it with heart. In my mind's eye, I can still see him playing defensive back and taking down running backs twice his size. Because Mike died at such a young age, he will always remain young in my memory; he will always be my friend.

There were four of us that lived on either side of the Oak Street Bridge: Jack Lord, Mike Brady, Jim Ball and me. We played together come summer, winter, spring or fall. The weather made little difference; it just altered the games we played in the sand box at Jim Ball's house or when we played Army in the shed at Mike's. In the winter we always made a snow fort, and Mike always wanted to be the hero. Little did we know then that was to be his des-

tiny.

We were very lucky to grow up in Newport, New Hampshire in the 1950's and 60's. We could leave the house early in the morning, play with our friends all day and never have to worry about anything. Our



mothers watched over all the children in the neighborhood as if they were their own. We rode in Mrs. Ball's Kaiser to go swimming up at the airport on hot summer days. If the children along Middle Street wanted a baseball game in the field between Silverman's junk yard and Mike's home, we played baseball.

Roger Small was Mike's next door neighbor. Although several years older, he

was very close to Mike. Roger took Mike's death very hard and over the years Roger has been the driving force to keep Mike's memory alive. A few years ago Roger asked me to help him memorialize Mike in some way. Another native son, Justin Rollins, had given his life for his country in Iraq and the Town/State made the Elm Street bridge a memorial to Justin. We thought that since Mike lived so close to the Oak Street Bridge, it would be a fitting memorial to Mike.

With the help and support of Town Manager Dan O'Neill and the Board of Selectman, permission was given to re-dedicate the Oak Street Bridge to the memory of Mike Brady. With support from members of the class of 1964 and 1965, as well as from friends and strangers, we have raised enough money to purchase a bronze placard. Dale Flewelling has offered his considerable talent to paint two signs depicting Mike's face and identifying the bridge as a memorial to Mike.

Please come to the dedication which will be held at the Oak Street Bridge on June 27, 2010 at 12:30 pm. The American Legion has offered to preside, and the class of 1965 will attend as part of the weekend celebration of their 45<sup>th</sup> class reunion. I know Mike would be proud to have the Oak Street Bridge memorialized in his honor.

## Update on pier bridge project

Jackie Cote

FINALLY! We now have a construction schedule for the Pier & Wrights Railroad Covered Bridge Preservation Project. Wrights Construction Company, Inc. of Mount Holly, VT (no connection to the covered bridge!) has been awarded the contract for the project. The start date is May 31, 2010 with a completion date by September 17 of this year.

Work to be performed at Pier Bridge includes the three-part fire suppression

system, siding and portal repairs, new guardrail and other minor repairs and enhancements. Work on the Wrights Bridge will include structural repairs to one of the upper chords, fire suppression, siding, roof and deck replacement.

The Newport Historical Society sincerely thanks all who supported the fundraising conducted in 2006 & 2007. We raised \$143,000, which was \$43,000 more than

the \$100,000 match necessary to secure the \$500,000 grant. An additional smaller grant of \$111,792 was secured separately by the NH Dept of Historical Resources. The total available funds for the two bridges are: \$500,000 Pier Bridge grant, \$111,792 Wrights Bridge grant plus the additional \$43,000 extra raised by NHS. Look for a report in the August newsletter on the progress of work!

## Newporters and world war II

andy andrews

These World War II clippings have been gathered from the Argus Champion.

## Newporter Remembers Pearl Harbor

By Phil Chapman, Argus Champion Dec. 4, 1991

"No one who was at Pearl Harbor, or even not, can forget that it happened. The hundreds and hundreds of ships which were lost," says Norman Gage.

A retired US Navy captain, Gage is a Newport native and a 1929 graduate of Towle High School.

On Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, he was a 28-year-old lieutenant serving aboard the USS Tautog a submarine.

Following six weeks at sea, the Tautog had returned to Pearl Harbor that Friday. "We got there just in time," he quietly notes.

On Sunday morning, Gage was preparing to return to a morning shift at the submarine base after spending two day's leave with Helen (Reed), his wife and Norman Jr., his two-year-old son.

Near 8 a.m., Gage received a call that Pearl harbor was under attack, and he "better get back there right away." Racing the 12 miles from the family's home to the base, he arrived shortly before the second Japanese torpedo-plane and bomber wave.

Three hundred yards from where the Tautog was docked, the heart of the United State's Pacific fleet lay crippled and burning on "Battleship Row."

During the second attack, Gage helped in manning one of the submarine's two 50-caliber machine guns and its surface guns on deck.

At the couple's home, Mrs. Gage could "see the ack-ack" (anti-aircraft artillery) rounds and smoke billowing into the Hawaiian sky.

As the attack ended, Gage said, his overwhelming sense was one of "grief at the loss of those ships and the men that manned them. . . . The great ships burning, upside down and all the men inside them."

The following spring, Mrs. Gage and her son were evacuated from the war zone, returned to Newport and were interviewed by Henry Mahoney of the Argus-Champion. Since retiring in 1965, Gage divides his year between New London and Mount Pleasant, S. C.

Looking back 50 years to Dec. 7, 1941, Gage simply says, "The one memory everybody has is that tragedy that occurred."

## Hero Home in Newport

NEWPORT, Oct. 2 — A much decorated Newporter, Pvt. William C. Huntoon has returned home with a few odd furnishings from the home of Hermann Goering to add to his household.

In addition, the returned veteran has seen his daughter, Marguerite, 3, for the first time as she was born three months before he went overseas.

Pvt. Huntoon wears the ETO ribbon with five stars denoting battles at Brest, Normandy, Belgium, Holland and the Rhine. He also wears the Bronze Star Medal for heroic service in a military operation in Brittany in September of last year. In addition to these honors bestowed by his own country, he was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government.

Pvt. Huntoon was a member of the 877th Airborne Engineers and his work involved reconnaissance while locating landing strips for planes.

From Goering's home, Pvt. Huntoon obtained tablecloths and blankets.



Norman Gage

## Paging 'Mr. Smith' in Newport Confuses Six at the Same Table

NEWPORT, July 25—The din of hilarity and talk which usually prevails when a group of service and ex-servicemen get together was suddenly hushed one day this week at the Winston Hotel when Cleo Franklin, owner of the hotel, walked up to a table and paged "Mr. Smith."

The reason for the silence was due to the fact that sitting at the table were six Smith boys and none of the six knew which one he meant. The group included Clayton, Leroy, Adam and Harold Smith, members of the 197th National Guard, who recently returned to the States and have been honorably discharged: Kenneth Smith in the Army and John Smith, not in the service. Clayton, Leroy, Kenneth and John are brothers.



# Newport Historical Society Membership Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Junior (\$1)

Corporate/Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Bronze(\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Silver (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Gold (\$75) \_\_\_\_\_ Platinum(\$100) \_\_\_\_\_ Diamond(\$100+)

Here's my additional donation to the: Museum \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Operating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Building\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method: \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check (Newport Historical Society) Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: Newport Historical Society PO Box 413 Newport, NH 03773

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## Newport Notables: captain ira Stowell 1855-1898

## mary lou mcguire

Newport native Ira Stowell is remembered for his command of Company M, Third Regiment, NH National Guard. Born June 19, 1855, Mr. Stowell was the son of Sylvanus G. and Wealthy Libbey Stowell. He married F. Adell Averill in 1874, and they had one son who survived only a few months. Three years after the death of his first wife, he married Mabel Bartlett Prescott. Mr. Stowell was a Newport merchant, receiving his training in his father's grocery store. He eventually became partner with his father in a hardware store located in Woodbury's Block (razed to construct the present court house.) They also had a ready made clothing and tailoring shop. Over the years he partnered with John H. Glynn (hardware and livery) and John C. Silsby (hardware.) Mr. Stowell served the town of Newport as a director of the Citizens National Bank and chairman of the Board of Selectmen. He was a member of the Masons and I.O.O.F. Mr. Stowell's military career began with Co. D. NH National Guards.

Co. M was organized in January, 1898 and mustered into active service in February. On February 15 the U.S.S. Maine exploded in Havana Harbor. War with Spain was formally declared on April 25, with the intent of putting an

end to hostilities between Spain and Cuban revolutionaries. This war spanned four months: a peace protocol was signed by Spain and the US on August 12. Co. M departed Newport for Concord, NH on May 10, 1898 to await transfer to Chickamauga, GA. Newport gave them a two-day sendoff, beginning with a union meeting of Newport churches, a reception at the Opera House and banquet at the Phenix Hotel. Departure on the 8am train, Tuesday, May 10 included an escort from the Armory by the Fred Smyth Post and the Sugar River Lodge I.O.O.F., a cheering crowd of hundreds, "cannon crackers" (large firecrackers) and the Newport Cadet Band. After Co M was only six days at Chickamauga it was reported that the water had been poisoned by spies. Although among the best equipped regiment of all states present, Co M suffered from poor rations, brutally hot weather, and continual rumors of when or if they were to join the battle. By July 30 complaints of poor water supplies found their way to Newport, deteriorating to the need to boil all water by August 6. Reports of the first men falling ill, with sickness on the rise, preceded a description of three deaths in three days within the camp by the end of August. On August 31, 1898, Capt. Stowell died of typhoid fever.

Sources: Argus Spectator, January - September, 1898



Captain Ira Stowell at Chickamauga Park, GA.



Stowell gravesite at Maple Street Cemetery