

GANNAM mentions in Savannah Morning News

OBITUARIES:[HOME Edition 12]

Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Jan 3, 2006. p. 4C

Durrence, Edna Louise Edna Louise Durrence, 69, of Savannah, died Sunday, Jan 1, 2006 at Hospice Savannah, Inc. She was born in Claxton, GA, and had lived most of life in Savannah, GA. She was a member of Calvary Baptist Temple, and the Order of the Amaranth's, and Woodmen of the World. She was preceded in death by her parents, Henry Morgan Grimes and Julia Rogers Grimes, husband, Melvin Johnson Durrence, and a sister, Gail Newell.

She is survived by a daughter and son in law, Julie and Mark Gannam of Savannah, GA; two grandchildren, Amanda Christine Gannam and Nicholas Morgan Preston Gannam; two nieces, Sarah Elizabeth Newell and Katherine Alison Newell; nephew, Daniel Adam Newell; a brother in law, Ernest Andrew Newell.

Visitation: 6-8 p.m. Tuesday at the Hubert C. Baker Funeral Home. Funeral Services: 2 p.m. Wednesday at Bull Creek Baptist Church, with Rev. Travis Cowart, officiating. Interment will follow in the Church Cemetery. Mrs. Durrence will be taken to the church one hour prior to the service to lie in state. Remembrances: Hospice Savannah, Inc., 1352 Eisenhower Drive, Savannah, GA 31406. Hubert C. Baker Funeral Home

MICHAEL – Uncle Mike

WWII VETS GET DIPLOMAS DECADES LATER [Corrected 07/17/06]; WAR INTERRUPTED THE EDUCATION OF TWO ARMSTRONG STUDENTS.:[HOME Edition]

Erik Tryggstad. Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Nov 11, 1999. p. 1A

Fifth- and sixth-year seniors in college have nothing on Michael Gannam.

CORRECTION: (November 13) The photographs of two World War II veterans who recently received diplomas from Armstrong Atlantic State University were switched on page 1A Thursday. Alvie Smith appeared on the left, and Michael Gannam appeared on the right.

The Savannah attorney just got his associate of arts degree from Armstrong Atlantic State University last month -- more than 58 years after he originally enrolled.

The school wasn't even a university then. It was Armstrong Junior College, and it was located on Gaston Street across from Forsyth Park, in what's now referred to as the Armstrong House.

Gannam and another classmate, Alvie Smith, returned to the Armstrong House recently to receive their degrees. Both men were enrolled there when World War II broke out, and both were called into service before they could finish their education.

Gannam, a graduate of Benedictine Military School in Savannah, enrolled in September 1941. His brother, George, graduated from Benedictine in 1939 and was in the Army Air Corps, serving at Hickam Field, adjacent to the Navy's base at Pearl Harbor.

On Dec. 7, 1941, he heard the fateful news. The Japanese had attacked. The next day Armstrong students gathered at "The Nut," a lunch spot in a carriage house behind the school, so named because there was a pecan tree nearby that was constantly dropping nuts on the students.

They listened to a radio as President Roosevelt gave the declaration of war and denounced the attack on Pearl Harbor. Gannam's friends asked him, "Wasn't your brother stationed out there?"

"The attack came on Sunday," Gannam said. "It wasn't until Wednesday that the War Department sent us a telegram."

George was one of 3,700 American casualties at Pearl Harbor and one of 91 Army Air Corps personnel killed in the attack. It devastated his family. But now that it was war, Gannam knew he might have to follow in his brother's footsteps. Soon.

He and Smith went down to Hunter Army Airfield and enlisted with the reserve in the last days of 1942. Smith, a fellow Savannahian, was a court reporter from 1939 to 1941. He was supposed to be part of the Armstrong graduating class of 1943. He joined the reserve in part to avoid being called into service before he graduated. Going early wasn't part of the deal.

"They promised us we'd finish before we were called. Don't trust the government," Smith said.

They were joined by Sammy Reed, another Armstrong student who was enlisting with the

reserve. Reed played trumpet in a family orchestra that performed at locations all over Savannah, Gannam said. Reed's mother drove them to the airfield, and told Gannam that since he'd lost a brother, it didn't seem fair that he might have to go to war.

Of the three students in the car that day, only Reed didn't make it back.

The students got their orders to leave for the war in March of 1943, Gannam said. They left Savannah and reported to Biloxi, Miss., to begin training.

Gannam served in New Guinea and the Philippines during the war. He was a high-speed radio operator for the Army Air Corps. He was part of the Allied "island hopping" campaign. After an island was seized, he would come ashore with a mobile communications unit, powered by a gas generator, and start transmitting information to the rest of the forces.

"As soon as the air strip was secure, we'd go ashore and set up our operation," he said. Smith fought in the European theater, flying 35 missions over Nazi Germany before the war ended.

Reed was also in the air service, navigating, dropping bombs and firing the nose gun in a mid-size bomber in the Pacific campaign. His plane went down in a mission near Okinawa on Aug. 14, 1945, the same day Japan agreed to surrender unconditionally, Gannam said.

Smith and Gannam returned to the United States without an Armstrong degree. But that didn't prevent either from going on to higher education.

"I was discharged Jan. 26, 1946," Gannam said. "On Jan. 27, I was in Athens."

The University of Georgia accepted credit Gannam earned by serving during the war and admitted him to its law school. He graduated with a law degree in 1948 and later got a graduate degree in political science from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. He then came back to Savannah to practice law.

Smith was admitted to the University of Wisconsin and went into the public relations business after he graduated. He worked for General Motors and retired in 1988 as director of corporate communication. He credited honesty and forthrightness with reporters as keys to his success.

Although both men have no shortage of degrees, the fact that they didn't have degrees from Armstrong has been a sort of thorn in their flesh.

"I heard Michael being teased because he never graduated," said Melinda Thomas, director of alumni affairs for Armstrong. So Gannam's wife, Marion, had the idea to give them the degrees that the war had interrupted. Thomas and other Armstrong officials pulled their transcripts and found credits from their war service and education at other universities to complete their associates' degrees. The diplomas they got are for official degrees, not honorary degrees, Thomas said.

"It was a complete surprise to me," Gannam said. Marion knew about it and kept the secret from him for about a year.

Both men said they weren't expecting school officials to break out the caps and gowns for a much-belated graduation ceremony. Standing in the blue graduation robe, tassel dangling from his mortarboard, Gannam joked with the other vets about his long-awaited degree. "I finally made it. I feel like I'm educated," he said with a laugh.

Reporter Erik Tryggestad can be reached at 652-0318. [Illustration]

Caption: (1) Smith, right, and Gannam are shown here in their class photos.\

(2) AMERICAN FLAG\ (3) Erik Tryggestad/Savannah Morning News\ Michael Gannam, left, and Alvie Smith receive their degrees recently from Armstrong Atlantic State University President Frank A. Butler.

Credit: By Erik Tryggestad,

SEVEN BENEDICTINE CLASSES FROM 1930S AND '40S TO GATHER:[HOME Edition]

Polly Powers Stramm. Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Sep 3, 2001. p. 4B

To a member of the Baby Boomer generation, T-ball is a sport played by rambunctious preschoolers. To anyone who attended Benedictine Military School in the 1930s and 1940s, T-ball has a different meaning. Back then T-ball was a vehicle that transported BC football players back and forth to games.

"It was an old automobile, a bus really, like a Model T Ford I guess," explained S.T. McTeer, a member of BC's Class of '41. Anyone who went to BC knows about T-ball and jug, McTeer said. Whenever a cadet

reached a certain number of demerits he had to walk behind the school, a punishment the boys nicknamed jug.

Plenty of stories about jug, T-ball and the good old days will be circulating this weekend when seven BC classes get together for a reunion at the old school on Bull and 34th streets.

"Every year we lose one or two (graduates), so this year we decided to invite the other classes," said McTeer, a member the '41 reunion committee. Others include Bert Trapani, Charlie Ray, Billy Doyle, Sonny Bodziner, Leon Slotin, Jack Stacy and **Mike Gannam**.

At least one man who will be sorely missed at this year's reunion is Coach Jack Thompson, who died a few months ago. In a yellowed newspaper clipping from that era, Thompson was recognized on his retirement by Father Boniface as a man "who will go down in Benedictine history as one of its most successful coaches."

Other vintage newspaper stories included more news: Stacy was elected captain of the BC football team in 1940 and Trapani was alternate captain. At graduation the following year Bodziner was valedictorian, Stacy received the Class of 1924 cup for the ideal cadet in the senior class and Ray was awarded the Thomas J. Dooley memorial medal for military excellence.

Reunion organizers decided to start the party at 6 p.m. Saturday so those who no longer drive at night can get home before dark. The \$25 per person charge includes heavy hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar and a jukebox stocked with selections like "In the Mood," "Deep Purple" and "Beer Barrel Polka."

"We'll have the reunion in what we called the armory, but what they now call the gym," McTeer said. "It's been done over and looks excellent."

On Sunday, an 11 a.m. brunch will be held at The Club (formerly the Officers' Club) at Hunter Army Airfield. Brunch tickets are \$9. McTeer drove out to BC and found lists of graduates and addresses of the various classes involved, but he's afraid some of the classmates didn't hear about the reunion. Those folks should call McTeer at 897-3593 or Bert Trapani at 786-5588 for information about the reunion.

Organizers also are asking classmates to bring scrapbooks, photographs or any other memorabilia from the '30s and '40s.

[Illustration]

Caption: Special to the Savannah Morning News\ The 1940 BC football team. Bottom row, sitting from left: David Kelley; Henry Mahany; S.T. McTeer; Charlie Angelus; Jimmy Petit; Sheftall Coleman; Charlie "Doc" Harley; and Barrett Welsh. Second row, kneeling: Red Fogarty; Billy Ray; Fred Von Kamp; Googie Cody; John Lyons; Bert Trapani; Jack Stacy; Dick Brown; Alec Carellas and Steve Craig. Third row: Richard McGuire; George Doerner; ? Davis; Harrell Murray; Tom "Horse" Mooney; John Dillon; **Buddy Fischer**; Henry Chandler; Vic Mell; John Nugent; ?; and Denny Leonard. Back row, (only faces visible) from left: Mike Corcoran; Langdon Cooper; Floyd Gamble; ? Mataxas; "Horrible" Hester; Tom Nugent; Billy "Diz" Elliott; and Jimmy Stafford.

OBITUARIES:[HOME Edition]

Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Jun 11, 2003. p. 2B

Michael J. Gannam, 80, died Tuesday, June 10, 2003.

He was born in Savannah to Karam and Annie Gannam and was a communicant of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Mr. Gannam graduated from Benedictine Military School in 1941 and served with the U.S. Army Air Corps in the South Pacific during World War II. He attended Armstrong Junior College and received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Georgia in 1948.

He was the senior partner in the law firm of Gannam & Gnann, LLP. Mr. Gannam taught business law, political science and history at Armstrong State College from 1951 to 1962.

He was active in his community serving on many boards and with community organizations, including the Historic Savannah Foundation, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Savannah Arts Commission, the Savannah Council of World Affairs, and the Gilmer Lecture Series Fund. Mr. Gannam was a former president of the Savannah Bar Association and served on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia from 1968 to 1999.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Marion DeFrank Gannam; four children, James Gannam and Cynthia Heitger, Ann Gannam and Dan Gourde, Elizabeth and Ron Jorde, and Joe Gannam and Melanie Marks; and three grandchildren, Joshua, Nathan, and Joseph Gannam.

The family will receive friends from 5:00-7:00 p.m., Thursday, June 12 at the residence. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m., Friday, June 13 at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Burial: Bonaventure Cemetery.

Remembrances: In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be sent to Armstrong Atlantic State University, Michael J. and Marion DeFrank Gannam Scholarship Fund, 11935 Abercorn Street, Savannah, Georgia 31419. Fox & Weeks Funeral Directors Hodgson Chapel

MICHAEL JOSEPH GANNAM ATTORNEY 1922-2003; LONG-TIME LAWYER CARED FOR PEOPLE:[HOME Edition]

Jan Skutch. Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Jun 11, 2003. p. 1B

Michael Gannam walked to his Bay Street law office each day. Each night he walked home. That ended Tuesday when Gannam, 80, died at Candler Hospital.

"If Mike Gannam had a car, I didn't know about it," said attorney Frank Seiler. "The guy walked everywhere he went - and at a steady pace."

Gannam, whom one colleague called a "senior statesman" in state bar circles and another described as a person whose views attracted careful attention, was a man with a way with people. "What a steady guy he was," Seiler said. "If Mike had an enemy in this world, it was a big secret."

Frank S. Cheatham Jr., senior superior courts judge, said Gannam, though considered low-key, "was sensitive to people and their needs." Cheatham and Gannam graduated together from the University of Georgia law school in 1948. That was after Gannam returned from World War II. Gannam, whose brother, George K. Gannam, was the first Savannahian to be killed in that war, served three years in the U.S. Army Air Corps in New Guinea and the Philippines. He returned home to enter law school. He passed the bar in 1948 and was admitted to practice the following year.

Gannam earned a master's degree from the University of North Carolina before returning the Savannah to open his practice in January 1951. He later was a sole practitioner before being joined in 1977 by J. Hamrick Gnann Jr.

Gannam's son, Joseph, joined them in 1984. Gannam was president of the Savannah Bar Association in 1978. But his biggest contribution to the organized bar came as a 30-year member of the State Bar of Georgia's board of governors before he stepped down in 1999. Seiler, who served as state bar president in 1972, said Gannam stood out for his steadiness on the governing board. "He rarely missed a meeting," Seiler said, "He was sort of like a senior statesman." Gannam was seldom vocal at board meetings and his views were not always popular, Seiler said. "But when he spoke, they sure listened to him."

Seiler said Gannam's passion was for activities that helped people - like pro bono work for those who

could not afford lawyers. He was president of the Legal Aid Society of Savannah, representing poor Savannahians, from 1960-62. "He was a gentleman lawyer, a lawyer's lawyer," said attorney Harvey Weitz, who served on the board of governors with Gannam for nine years. "He always looked after the best interests of his clients."

But the mark of a lawyer, others say, is his integrity and, with Gannam, they add, that mark was indelible. "Mike was very hardworking, very straight forward and very honest," said attorney Aaron Buchsbaum, a lawyer partner of Gannam's in the 1950's-1970's. "If Mike said something, you could believe it," said Buchsbaum..

[Illustration]

Caption: SMN file photo (1981) (Gannam)

GEORGE K. GANNAM

TRADITION MARCHES ON; BENEDICTINE HONORS GRADUATE KILLED AT PEARL HARBOR.
Noelle Phillips. Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 8, 1999. p. 1C

Every Dec. 7 for the past four years, Jeremy Counihan put on his green Army suit and shiny black shoes. He marched across the Benedictine Military School parade field to honor a man who died in 1941. Even though the drill never changes, Counihan said his last Gannam Day meant a lot. "It's a chance to honor the Gannam family and a chance to represent the school in a great way," Counihan said.

The Gannam Day ceremony is a 54-year-old Benedictine tradition that honors Staff Sgt. George K. Gannam, a school alumnus who died when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

At 10:25 a.m. Tuesday, hundreds of teen-age boys in green uniforms marched onto a parade field outside Savannah's only military school. At 10:30 a.m., they began sounding off commands and saluting. The American Legion George K. Gannam Post in Thunderbolt awarded medals to two outstanding cadets. This year, Counihan won the God and Country medal for sound leadership, and sophomore cadet Staff Sgt. Chris Butler earned the George K. Gannam Medal for outstanding cadet. The post also gave an American flag to the Gannam family.

Retired Army Col. Kenneth Seymour of Savannah spoke to the cadets about Gannam's life at Benedictine and his death at Pearl Harbor. He also urged them to treasure the military teachings at the school. "The best tribute you can pay George Gannam is to learn those lessons well and take them with you for the rest of your collective lives," Seymour said. "They will help mold you into the leaders of tomorrow."

The ceremony concluded as the cadets marched before their honored guests and saluted. The parade ended an event that student Col. Michael Doan, the school's senior-ranking cadet, called "significant." "We need to always remember and recognize those who died for our country," Doan said.

Military reporter Noelle Phillips can be reached at 652-0366 or by e-mail at phillips@savannahnow.com.

[Illustration]

Caption: Photos by John Carrington/Savannah Morning News\ (1) Benedictine cadets pass in review during the ceremony.\ (2) Chris Butler earned the George K. Gannam Medal for outstanding cadet.\ (3) (George Gannam Medal)

BENEDICTINE MILITARY SCHOOL GANNAM DAY THREE GENERATIONS TAKE PART IN SALUTE TO FALLEN COMRADE:[HOME Edition]

Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 8, 2006. p. 1C

Cadets of the Benedictine Military School marched in review during the annual Gannam Day ceremony on the school's campus.

The ceremony honors Staff Sgt. George K. Gannam, a school alumnus who died when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Cadet Lt. Col. Christopher Sanders was the recipient of the God and Country Medal for leadership awarded by the American Legion George K. Gannam Post in Thunderbolt. Cadet Staff Sgt. David Zwick earned the George K. Gannam Memorial Medal for outstanding cadet.

[Illustration]

Caption: Photos by Steve Bisson/Savannah Morning News (1) Cadets of the Benedictine Military School salute as the National Anthem is played at the annual Gannam Day Ceremony. (2) Herbie Griffin, right, reads from a 1938 issue of the Campus Quill, the BC student newspaper, to Daniel T. Fogarty, left, and John Sheahan. All were classmates of George K. Gannam, who was the editor of the newspaper. (3) George Doerner, from the BC class of 1942, played "Taps" at the end of the Gannam Day ceremony. Cadets of the Benedictine Military School marched in review during the annual Gannam Day ceremony on the school's campus. The ceremony honors Staff Sgt. George K. Gannam, a school alumnus who died when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Cadet Lt. Col. Christopher Sanders was the recipient of the God and Country Medal for leadership awarded by the American Legion George K. Gannam Post in Thunderbolt. Cadet Staff Sgt. David Zwick earned the George K. Gannam Memorial Medal for outstanding cadet.

BENEDICTINE MILITARY SCHOOL GANNAM DAY THREE GENERATIONS TAKE PART IN SALUTE TO FALLEN COMRADE:[HOME Edition]

Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 8, 2006. p. 1C

'GREATEST GENERATION' BRINGS WWII LESSONS TO LIFE; WEST CHATHAM ELEMENTARY STUDENTS 'FASCINATED' AS TWO VETERANS RECALL THEIR WARTIME EXPERIENCES:[HOME Edition]

CHUCK MOBLEY. Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 6, 2006. p. 1C

Penny Matthews' students have studied World War II for three weeks, learning about the causes of the war and the cost its veterans paid.

Tuesday afternoon, they got to meet two of the men who answered their nation's call to arms, as West Chatham Elementary School conducted "A Tribute to Our Greatest Generation."

'WHAT FREEDOM MEANS TO ME' Visit know.savannahnow.com at 2 p.m. today to hear audio clips of four West Chatham Elementary students reading excerpts from their personal essays about "What Freedom Means to Me."; INSIDE "Where were you on Dec. 7, 1941?" an essay by Armstrong Atlantic State University student Caroline Bonner. 8C

"They're fascinated by the war," Matthews said of the 4th- and 5th-graders. "They want to know specifics and facts about it."

That curiosity was met by courtly charm as Travis Nichols and Russ Sciandra answered questions about their service.

Nichols, 83, recalled his years aboard the battleship USS North Carolina. He told the students about surviving a torpedo attack, and he assured them of his unflinching confidence that the United States would eventually prevail in that struggle.

Moreover, Nichols confessed that he enjoyed chow-hall food. After answering the students' questions, Nichols held up a picture of himself that was taken shortly after he had enlisted in 1941. "That's what I looked like then," he said. "Quite a contrast, huh?"

Sciandra, also 83, didn't bring a picture of his uniform - instead, he wore it, complete with service ribbons and an Eighth Air Force patch on the shoulder. Patting the still-shiny buttons, he said that he weighs 140

to 145 pounds now -

about the same as when he entered the Army Air Corps in January 1943. He was in England from July of that year until May 1945, Sciandra recalled, working in an operations office by day and waking up airmen in the middle of the night to tell them to get ready for a mission. When asked if he had any "sad memories," Sciandra smiled widely and said, "I hated to leave home. I was upset for weeks about that."

Matthews was delighted by the presence of Nichols and Sciandra and the easy rapport they quickly developed with the students. The lessons in class, and the conversations in the cafeteria, Matthews said, "help the students grasp what previous generations have done for them."

GANNAM DAY AT BC

Benedictine Military School plans to observe its annual Gannam Day Review at 10 a.m. Thursday at the school's drill field. The observance honors Staff Sgt. George K. Gannam, a 1938 BC graduate who was killed in the attack at Pearl Harbor, and all other Americans who have died in military service. The event is free and open to the public. Benedictine is located at 6502 Seawright Drive. For more information, call (912) 644-7000. **INSIDE "Where were you on Dec. 7, 1941?"** an essay by Armstrong Atlantic State University student Caroline Bonner. 8C

PEARL HARBOR REMEMBERED:[HOME Edition] Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 2, 2000. p. 5E

Savannah has not forgotten Dec. 7, 1941 -- the day Japanese bombers attacked Pearl Harbor. Two Pearl Harbor memorial services are planned to remember the day and America's entry into World War II.

Thursday -- 10:30 a.m. annual Gannam Day at Benedictine School on Seawright Drive. This memorial service honors George K. Gannam, a Benedictine student killed at Pearl Harbor and Savannah's first World War II casualty. The service features a review of the corps of cadets, "Taps" and a speaker.

Most Americans don't know a thing about Pearl Harbor and could care less, said World War II veteran William C. Sutton Jr. But some do remember. Sutton, along with several other Savannah-area veterans, came to Benedictine Military School's Gannam Day ceremony Thursday to remember.

CORRECTION: UNPUBLISHED CORRECTION: George Doerner is a member of the Class of 1942 from Benedictine.

Now in its 55th year, the Gannam Day ceremony honors Staff Sgt. George K. Gannam, a school alumnus thought to be the first Savannahian to die in World War II when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941.

"He was on one side of the fence and I was on the other in the Navy yard," Sutton said. "That was 59 years ago. This brings back a lot of old memories."

During the 30-minute ceremony, retired Master Sgt. Stanley Royal spoke to several hundred students, teachers, veterans, and friends and family of George Gannam about Pearl Harbor and the contributions of the Americans who lost their lives there. "These men made better warriors because they fought with their minds and hearts and not just their bodies," Royal said. "Because of them, our lives are free. Because of them, our nation lives."

The American Legion George K. Gannam Post 184 in Thunderbolt presented awards to two outstanding cadets. Senior Patrick Holland won the God and Country Medal for leadership and sophomore Michael Hotard earned the George K. Gannam Medal for outstanding cadet.

George Gannam's brother, Michael, attended the ceremony and accepted a flag on behalf of the Gannam family, which he then, as is tradition, gave to the school to be flown there.

George Doerner, a classmate of George Gannam's in the Benedictine Class of 1938 (SEE CORRECTION), played "Taps," just as he did at Gannam's memorial service almost 60 years ago.

Veterans said the annual ceremony is important to them. Thomas Coffey goes to Gannam Day every year, he said, because remembering means a lot. "Pearl Harbor proved we should never again be unprepared," Coffey said.

[Illustration]

Caption: (1) Gannam \ Photos by John Carrington/Savannah Morning News\ (2) Michael Gannam, brother of George K. Gannam, presents an American flag Thursday to Benedictine school principal Kelly Burke, left, during the George K. Gannam memorial ceremony held in the gymnasium at Benedictine.\ (3) Student Col. William Flemming congratulates classmate Patrick Holland, left, with a hand shake Thursday after Holland received the God And Country Award as Gannam Day master of ceremonies George Foley, right, presents the George K. Gannam award to sophomore Michael Hotard at Benedictine.

PAYING HOMAGE TO A FALLEN HERO:[HOME Edition] Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 8, 2001. p. 3E Caption only text

[Illustration]

Caption: John Carrington/Savannah Morning News\ Benedictine Military School cadets pass in review during the annual Gannam Day ceremony held on the school's campus. The ceremony honors the memory of Benedictine alumnus George K. Gannam who is thought to be the first Savannahian to die in World War II during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. This year's recipient of the God and Country medal is Cadet Capt. Kevin Williams and the recipient of the Gannam Medal is Cadet Staff Sgt. Joseph Simmon.

NATIONAL PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY / 'LONGEST DAY' STILL LINGERS [Corrected 08/03/06]:[HOME Edition] Margaret Bailey. Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 8, 2002. p. 1C

On a quiet Sunday morning, at about 8 a.m., Dec. 7, 1941, a U.S. Marine Corp. platoon stood at attention in front of its barracks in Hawaii.

CORRECTION: (December 10) CLARIFICATION There are numerous survivors of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor living in this area. A Pearl Harbor remembrance day story on page 1C Sunday featured one of the survivors. Suddenly, that peace was shattered with a loud bang and smoke rising in the distance. Among the men in that formation, who watched firsthand as the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, was Ben Schwalls. More than 2,400 Americans died or are missing from that day, including 68 civilians. Another 1,000 were wounded.

During a memorial ceremony Saturday, at the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Pooler, memories of the horrific day flooded back for Schwalls. The program began with a welcome speech by Kent Davis, of the Fleet Reserve Association, and prayers were given. There was a 21 gun salute, "Taps" was played, and a presentation of the colors and a wreath as the crowd looked on. Janet Clements, a 14-year-old Meyers Middle School student, sang a heartfelt "Star Bangle Banner." A poem by Jack Lanham was read. Attending the flags during the ceremony were U.S. Navel Sea Cadets Tim McCoy and Nicklous Lee, both 13-year-old students at Mercer Middle School.

Both boys come from military families and hope to carry on the tradition. "The men and women didn't die in vain," said McCoy, who hopes to become a navel officer and fly a F-18 plane. The boys share a strong sense of pride in the U.S. armed forces. "All those men and women make me feel proud to be an American. You know that you are safe with our armed forces protecting us," said Lee.

A proclamation, signed by former President Bill Clinton in 1994 that designated Dec. 7 as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, was also read. It urged all American to observe the day with programs, ceremonies and activities in honor of those who served at Pearl Harbor. "That is the reason we have this

memorial service," said Davis. "I refer to it as the longest day. It started with Pearl Harbor and ended with WWII, exactly 1,365 days. It is a day we should not forget. It is the reason we are still breathing and have all of the freedoms we enjoy."

It was also a moment in American history that shouldn't be easily forgotten. "We can't afford to forget what happen in the past. I'm 73-years-old and it still bring tears to my eyes when I hear about it," said Robert Cannon, vice president of The Navy League, following the ceremony. When Pearl Harbor survivors were recognized, Schwalls stood up. He is the only known living survivor of Pearl Harbor in the Chatham County area.(SEE CLARIFICATION)

As a part of the platoon standing at attention on that fateful morning, he remembers well that day 61 years ago. "We heard a boom. I looked up and saw a man flying over the trees, with his hands and feet spread apart. I said 'Look, a man'," said Schwalls. "My lieutenant turned quickly. I don't know if he saw the man but he knew something wasn't right." Schwalls recalled that the lieutenant dismissed the platoon with his back turned to the unit. In seconds, everybody ran for ammunition that was locked up in the brig, he said.

"We had no ammunition on us because we were at peace. We weren't expecting an attack," Schwalls said. "What they did was a sneak attack on us and I want everyone to know that."

Dave Roberts and Chip Johns drove up from Jacksonville, Fla., to honor veterans like Schwalls. "We have a great respect for veterans, especially those who fought in WWII. They define who we want to be," said Roberts.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF A SAVANNAHIAN

Among the thousands of Americans that died in the attack on Pearl Harbor was Savannah resident Staff Sgt. George K. Gannam. An alumnus of Benedictine Military School, Gannam is thought to be the first Savannahian to die in World War II when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Let my story be heard by mothers * Whose sons I still enfold, And to all the wives of loved ones * Who defended me brave and bold.

Excerpt from the poem, "Voice - From the Arizona" by Jack Langham USN;read during ceremony at the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum

[Illustration]

Caption: Photos by Scott Bryant/Savannah Morning News (1) Benjamin Schwalls, 82, salutes during the presentation of the colors during Saturday's ceremony at the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum commemorating the 61st anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Schwalls was a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked by the Japanese in 1941, and shared his experience at the ceremony. (2) Above: Sgt. Daniel Ireland of the Parris Island Marine Band plays "Taps" during Saturday's ceremony. (3) Top: U.S. Naval Cadets Tim McCoy, left, and Nicklaus Lee, both 13, steady the flags. (4) Associated Press File Photo The USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which marks the spot where the battleship sank 61 years ago.

PEARL HARBOR: 64 YEARS LATER:[HOME Edition]

Savannah Morning News. Savannah, Ga.:Dec 8, 2005. p. 1A
WHO WAS SGT. GANNAM?

Sgt. Gannam graduated from Benedictine in 1938. He was the first Savannahian to die in World War II when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

The first known ceremony was held in 1945, the fourth anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was held at the Gannam family home. The 184 American Legion

Post sponsored the event and the entire student body and faculty of Benedictine participated.

Compiled by Julia Muller

64 YEARS LATER

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii - About 2,000 sailors, veterans, community leaders and guests bowed their heads Wednesday in remembrance of the attack on Pearl Harbor that hurled the U.S. into World War II 64 years ago.

Four F-15s flown by the Hawaii Air National Guard roared above the bay, including one jet that veered off from the group to symbolize the 2,390 people killed. The crowd included about 20 Pearl Harbor survivors.

The Associated Press. [Illustration] Caption: Richard Burkhart/Savannah Morning News\ George Doerner Jr., a classmate of George Gannam, plays taps, just as Review is hosted by American Legion Post 184. Benedictine Cadet Lt. Col. Blair Ritzert, background, second from right, was awarded the God and Country Medal for sound leadership. Cadet Sgt. Frances LaRossa, background right, was awarded the George K. Gannam Memorial Medal.