

Mayor visits Chief of Assonet Wampanoags, New Bedford native, WWII Veteran

“In our divided times, we can do well by recalling America at its most united.

Today I paid a visit to Windsong Blake, a New Bedford native who enlisted in the Navy at 16 just after Pearl Harbor. A longtime chief of the Assonet Wampanoag Tribe and multiple-black belt in karate, he has lived a full life.

At 99 years old, his memory is remarkably vivid, and he is generous in sharing his stories from the war. He had me hanging on every word as he described the scene of Japanese surrender on the deck of the USS Missouri.”-Jon Mitchell.

Empire Ford of New Bedford's “Veteran of the Month”: Edward Baker, served on the USS Hamilton in WWII

During the month of May, the 56th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory Edward Alden Baker, of New Bedford, who served as Chief Engineer in the United States Merchant Marines who was killed on April 20, 1944, aboard the USS Hamilton while serving in WWII.

Unfortunately, there is very little information available on the background of Mr. Baker except that he was from New Bedford and that he served his country with honor in the United States Merchant Marines, eventually paying the ultimate sacrifice during WWII.

Baker served as the Chief Engineer aboard the USS Hamilton, which was named after Paul Hamilton, the third US Secretary of the Navy. The liberty ship left Chesapeake Bay, Virginia on her fifth voyage, on April 2, 1944, with a crew of 47 Merchant Marines, 29 Naval Armed Guards and 504 Army Air Force Troops. According to the United States Naval Memorial website, the troops were specifically trained in mine demolition. For more efficient shipping logistics, it had been decided to keep the men and their 7000 tons of explosives together in the same unarmored ship.



Empire Ford of New Bedford photo.

The USS Hamilton was bound for Bizerte, Tunisia, but on the evening of April 20, 1944, after dark, the reported 62 ships in the Mediterranean Sea, near Algiers, encountered a flight of 23 German JU-88 and HE-111 bombers which attacked the

convoy.

According to the United States Naval Memorial website, "The first wave of German planes were met with no anti-aircraft fire since they were initially reported as "friendlies" and it was only after they neared the convoy that the planes encountered gunfire. It has been speculated that a member of the American Liberty ship, the USS Paul Hamilton was the perhaps the first to detect the German planes as gunfire is known to have come from the ship as the planes approached.

This reportedly led one of the attackers to follow the tracers to the USS Paul Hamilton, which became the first target. When the ship was hit by the German aerial torpedo, the ship exploded and became the largest loss of life on a liberty ship during WWII."

According to Wikipedia, when the aerial torpedo struck the Paul Hamilton and detonated the cargo of high explosives and bombs, the crew and passengers, who included 154 officers and men of the 831st Bombardment Squadron and 317 officers and men of the 32nd Photo Reconnaissance Squadron, were all lost. Of the 580 men aboard only one body was recovered.

As the massive explosion occurred, a combat cameraman on a nearby ship suddenly saw the sky turn from night to day and as the mushroom cloud rose up from what had been the USS Paul Hamilton, he snapped a picture which became famous, as within a month it was being published in newspapers as an example of the risks and carnage involved in getting supplies to the front.

According to the US Naval Memorial website, "The families of the USS Paul Hamilton sinking never knew the picture was of their loved ones as the details of the sinking remained classified for 50-years. Families were routinely told that their loved ones were 'Missing in action, presumed dead, in the Mediterranean Theater.' The facts of the disaster were

hidden for many years as the government did not want to face the families and explain why a loaded troop ship also carried 7,000 tons of explosives and munitions.”

Baker was declared a casualty of World War II and received the following medals for his heroic service: Merchant Marine Mariner’s Medal, Merchant Marine Combat Bar, Merchant Marine Atlantic War Zone Medal, Merchant Marine Mediterranean War Zone Medal and the Merchant Marine WWII Victory Medal.

Linda Ferreira, of Empire Ford, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford. Flags are raised by the staff at Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum. Those who would like to honor a local veteran in the future can contact Ferreira at lferreira@empirefordinc.com.

Empire Ford of New Bedford

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New Bedford to unveil new

Exercise Tiger exhibit, mural, during 80th Anniversary Memorial Service

"On April 28, 2024, at 1:00 PM there will be a Memorial Service of the 80th Anniversary of Exercise Tiger by the City of New Bedford. The Fort Taber~Fort Rodman Military Museum is a Co-Sponsor with the City. As President of the FT~FR Military Museum I am inviting everyone to attend.

The City of New Bedford Veterans' Advisory Board will honor the 749 United States sailors and soldiers who lost their lives during the devastating April 28, 1944 attack on the United States military training operation, Exercise Tiger.

Exercise Tiger was a D-Day dry run that was ambushed by a German E-boat flotilla and resulted in America's costliest incident of World War II, second only to Pearl Harbor. The surprise attack sank two American vessels and severely damaged a third. This year marks the 80th anniversary of Exercise Tiger.

The location is across the street from the FT~FR Military Museum, at 1000C Rodney French Blvd. New Bedford.

The Museum will be opening at 10:00 AM. After the service, the FT~FR Military Museum is inviting everyone to attend. The unveiling of the new Exercise Tiger exhibit and the 212th Field Artillery Mural at the FT~FR Military Museum.

Thank you,

Bill Niedzwiedz

President

Fort Taber~Fort Rodman Historical Assoc. Inc."



Fort Taber~Fort Rodman Historical Assoc. Inc. photo.

Empire Ford of New Bedford's “Veteran of the Month”: Walter Goulart, K.I.A. in WWI

“During the month of April, the 55th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory PVT Walter Goulart of New Bedford who was Killed in Action on October 17, 1918, during the opening of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, just one month before the end of the war.

Goulart was born in New Bedford to Azorean immigrants Antone and Frances (Perry) Goulart on February 1, 1895. He lived at 142 Fair Street and attended local New Bedford schools, later working in the New Bedford mills.

Some sources say that Goulart was inducted into the Army while

others say he enlisted on September 20, 1917 at the age of 22. Goulart was first stationed at Fort Devens, MA and went on to receive his infantry training at Fort Gordon, GA. He was initially assigned to Company D of the 302nd Infantry, 76th Division until November 12, 1917 and was then transferred to the Machine Gun Company of the 327th Infantry, 82nd Division.



Empire Ford photo.

On April 29, 1918, PVT Goulart was sent overseas to France. He served in a series of battles with the Allied Forces including the following engagements: St. Mihiel; Marbache Defensive Sector (Lorraine) Aug. 6 – Aug. 17; Lucey Defensive Sector (Lorraine) Aug. 28 to Sept. 11, Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

According to a story published in the SouthCoastToday.com, "A German sniper shot and killed Goulart on Oct. 7, 1918 near Chafel Chéhéry. He died in an important battle in the opening phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, one of World War I's final campaigns. The 327th Infantry was trying to retake the initiative after having slowed down in the face of strong German resistance. It took over the entire sector two days after he died." Sadly, Goulart died only a month before the end of the war.

According to Archives.gov, "The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was the largest operation of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in World War I, with over a million American soldiers participating. It was also the deadliest campaign in American history, resulting in over 26,000 soldiers being killed in action (KIA) and over 120,000 total casualties."

Walter Goulart became the first New Bedford serviceman of Portuguese descent to be killed in action during World War I. The article stated that other soldiers of Azorean descent had died earlier than he did, but they had died of disease while still in training camps.

Following Goulart's death, the Portuguese-American community in New Bedford built a memorial in his honor named Goulart Square, located at Rivet and Bolton Streets. The memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day on May 30, 1923 and then re-dedicated on May 26, 1997.

PVT Goulart was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart for his sacrifice to his country.

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Fort Taber Flag in New Bedford To Honor Father John B. DeValles WWI Veteran Awarded for Heroism

During the month of January, the 52nd Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of Rev. Father John Baptist DeValles, a WWI Veteran who was awarded for “extraordinary heroism and exceptional devotion to his duty.”

He was born, Joa Baptista DeValles, on Aug. 29, 1879 on the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores, and emigrated to the United States at the age of two years old, eventually residing at 39 Ingram St., New Bedford. He attended local schools and studied for the priesthood. He was ordained in 1906, serving in local parishes in New Bedford and Fall River.

According to the War Records Dept., “When the United States

entered World War I in 1917, despite being nearly 40 years old, (DeValles) set aside his comfortable life to volunteer as a chaplain through the Knights of Columbus and was attached to the Massachusetts National Guard's 104th Infantry Regiment, 26th "Yankee" Division. He was appointed to First Lieutenant (1LT) Chaplain on July 17, 1918. The Yankee Division was organized from National Guard units throughout New England and as the first entire U.S. division to arrive in France, it saw action in every major campaign of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF)."

The AEF helped the French Army on the Western Front during the Aisne Offensive and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. DeValles took part in the Defensive Champagne-Marne; Offensive Aisne-Marne; St. Mihiel; and Defensive Sectors: Rupt (Lorraine) and Troyon (Lorraine).

He was known as the "Angel of the trenches" often in "no man's land," comforting the injured and carrying the wounded to aid stations, administering to the dying. He made no distinction between allies or Germans.

Father DeValles returned to the United States with the Yankee Division in 1919 but died in May 1920 of abdominal cancer at St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, MA at the age of 41, due to exposure to mustard gas in France. He was awarded the nation's second highest military decoration, the Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously by Major General Clarence Edward, former Commanding General of the Yankee Division. "For extraordinary heroism in action near Apremont, Toul sector, France, April 10 to 13, 1918. Chaplain DeValles repeatedly exposed himself to heavy artillery and machine-gun fire in order to assist in the removal of the wounded from exposed points in advance of the lines. He worked for long periods of time with stretcher bearers in carrying wounded men to safety. Chaplain DeValles previously rendered gallant service in the Chemin des Dames sector, March 11, 1918, by remaining with a group of wounded during a heavy enemy bombardment."

He was also awarded the foreign decorations of the French Croix de Guerre with gilt star, under General Order No. 736-A, dated April 26, 1918, 32nd French Army Corps, with the following citation: "Extraordinary heroism and exceptional devotion to his duty. Under uninterrupted enemy fire, did not cease to care for the wounded and to encourage to renewed efforts the men worn out by hard fighting."

Some insight as to what the soldiers went through during WWI as documented by WWI letters explained that "there were no trenches in the area of the front, little wire and no shelters (dugouts). Rather, defenses were designed for open warfare and consisted of shallow foxholes covered with brush, positioned to provide mutually supporting fire along with numerous machine gun positions. The outpost line and principal resistance line were separated by a 1,000 yard artillery barrage zone designed to break up any attack that overran the outposts. Occupants of the outposts had the usual mission of fighting to the last man with no hope of reinforcement. At all hours, troops of the outpost line were fired on by machine guns and artillery of the German 7th Army. Food and water had to be carried to the forward troops by ration details through machine gun fire under cover of darkness. The troops suffered a high number of casualties due to heavy gas exposure."

In October 1920, shortly after Chaplain DeValles' death, the Katherine Street School in New Bedford was rededicated as the John B. DeValles School in his honor.

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Small Christmas miracle takes place in New Bedford as stolen bicycle is returned to 9-year old boy

On the morning of December 10th, an upset mom messaged us to report that her 9-year old son's most treasured possession was stolen from their home.

"STOLEN BIKE:

"Someone stole my son's bike he got for Christmas last year. It's a black Tony Hawk bike with tan wheels however the back tire has a bald spot right down the middle due to him always sliding it claiming he was doing tricks such as burn outs.

It was in our back hallway where we live and is now missing. Can everyone please help keep an eye out for it and if so possibly get it returned? This is not a bike that everyone has so it should be easy to spot. My son is only 9 and he really loved his bike and some scum just had to go and steal it.

This happened on Allen St., #NewBedford and it had to have been between midnight last night to early morning. Please call the NBPD at (508) 991-6300. -Ashley Ramos."



Ashley Ramos photo.

As most people know, when something is stolen odds are you can just kiss it goodbye or it is either busted down for parts or sold to a pawn shop. And many cynics would say, "That's so New Bedford. New Bedford sucks."

However, the truth is that New Bedford is **filled** with good, decent, people. Yes, there are some real jerks, but the truth is that most people in the city are good and want to prove it by helping people in time of need get a meal, a jacket, some clothing, a place to sleep, or help spread the word about a missing cat, dog, or wallet, or perhaps just offer a word of encouragement, inspiration or good ol fashioned advice.

That's exactly what happened. After we shared the post, the good people of New Bedford spread the word and kept an eye out for the bike as they commuted or walked around the city.

And guess what? The bike was spotted and returned to the delight of this 9-year old boy!

"My son's bike has been returned! Thank you sooo very much for helping spread the word. We where able to get it back thanks

to the posts and people sharing it. My son is beyond happy to have his bike back. Thank you so very much.”

Don't ever let people tell you that New Bedford sucks, because New Bedford is a spectacular place and the residents are awesome human beings.



Ashley Ramos photo.

Fort Taber Flag To Honor WWII New Bedford Veteran PFC Irving C. Kaplan

During the month of December, the 51st Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors

the memory of PFC Irving Chandler Kaplan, of New Bedford, a WWII veteran who was killed in Germany in 1945.

Kaplan, who lived at 26th Eight St., New Bedford, was born on July 6, 1915. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Kaplan. According to the archives at the University of Massachusetts Library, Kaplan attended Boston University and Harvard University Law School and went on to practice law in New Bedford, with offices in the National Bank Building.

He was inducted into the U.S. Army on Dec. 14, 1942 and served with the U.S. Army Signal Corps. PFC Kaplan was killed on August 25, 1945, at the age of 30, as the result of an accident while serving in Kassel Germany during WWII.

According to army.mil, throughout WWII, the Signal Corps served a variety of functions and had the responsibility for one of the most important systems used during World War II – radar. Success in combat depended on good communications and that was the Signal Corps' main mission. At its peak strength in the fall of 1944, the Signal Corps was comprised of over 350,000 officers and men, over six times more than had served in WWI.

According to army.mil, "In addition to sending messages, the Signal Corps retained responsibility for the Army's signal security and intelligence activity. The 2nd Signal Service Company performed intelligence-gathering duties."

Another specialized field that fell under the Signal Corps function was photography. "Its value and versatility reached new levels, especially during the second half of the war, partially due to improvements in training and organization. The Signal Corps created orientation and training films, using the talents of notables such as Frank Capra, who was commissioned as a major in the Signal Corps in 1942, and Theodor Seuss Geisel, who served as a member of Capra's documentary film crew. The Signal Corps also created an

unprecedented pictorial record of World War II.”

Members of the Jewish War Veterans New Bedford Post 154 erected a monument in Irving Kaplan’s honor. On June 19, 1949, a parade and memorial service were held, and Kaplan Square was dedicated in his honor. Kaplan Square is located at the intersection of Fair and Bolton Streets in the South End of New Bedford.

“If you take County Street south to Fair St. and turn right, you will drive straight to this monument in the middle of the Portuguese community which was then populated by many Jewish,” according to an article at the UMASS Library archives.

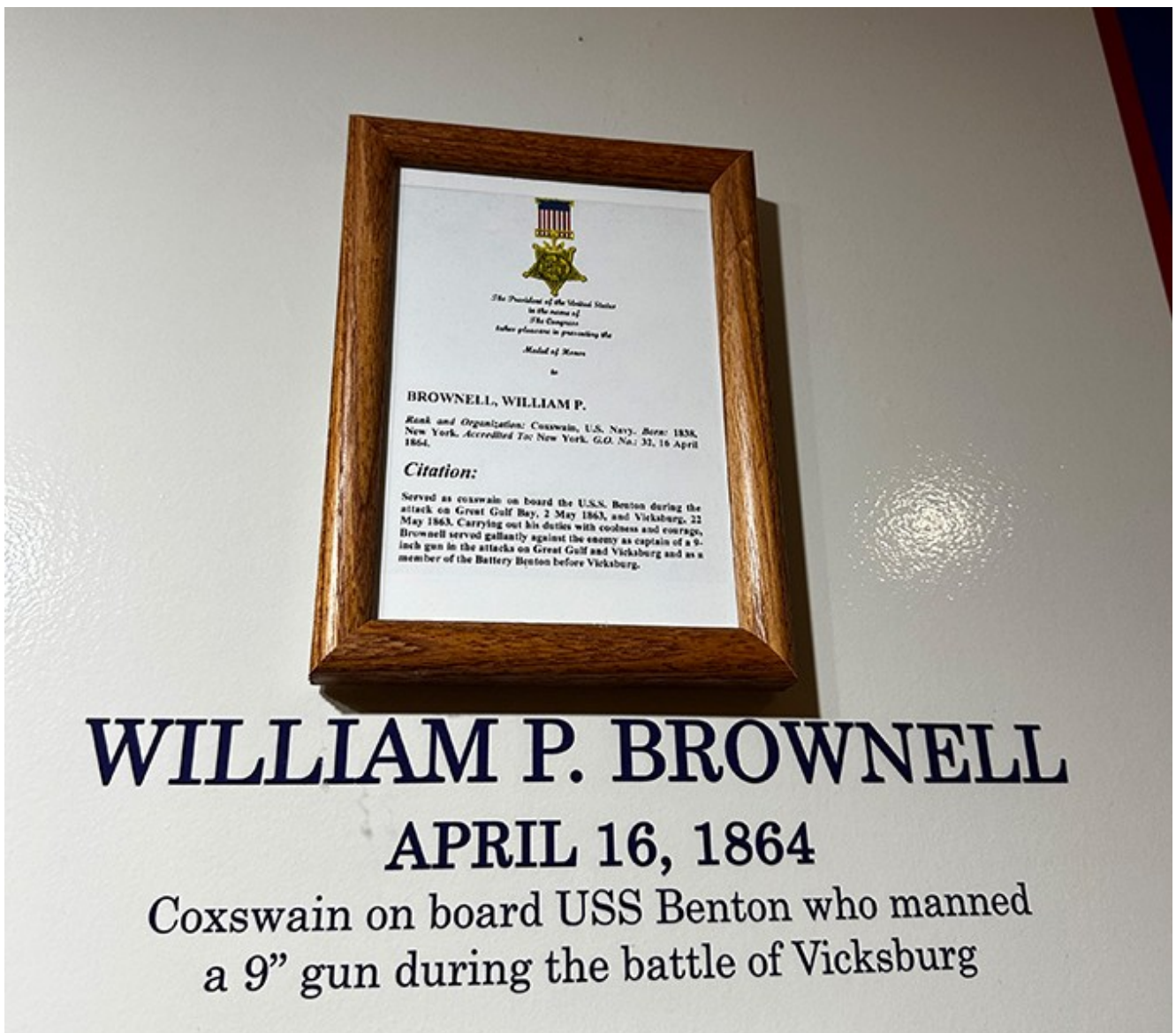
“In 1997 the 6th grade class of Mrs. Susan Baroody of the Congdon School took it on as a local beautification project to refurbish and replant the Kaplan memorial. It was rededicated on June 18, 1997, by the Jewish War Veterans in conjunction with the city of New Bedford.”

New Bedford Military Museum seeks help finding pictures of faceless Medal of Honor recipients

Within New Bedford’s military museum in Fort Taber, you can find a wall displaying the 9 medal of honor recipients of New Bedford. The Medal of Honor is the United States’ highest award for military valor in action. According to the “National Medal of Honor Museum”, of the 40 million Americans who have served in the Armed Forces since the Civil War, only 3,517

have earned the Medal of Honor.

Two of the nine New Bedford recipients have no photograph or painted portrait to display in our military museum, or any museum for that matter. I know it's a long shot, but if anyone has any historical photographs or paintings which could resemble these two individuals, please reach out as you will quite literally be holding on to a one-of-one historical photograph.



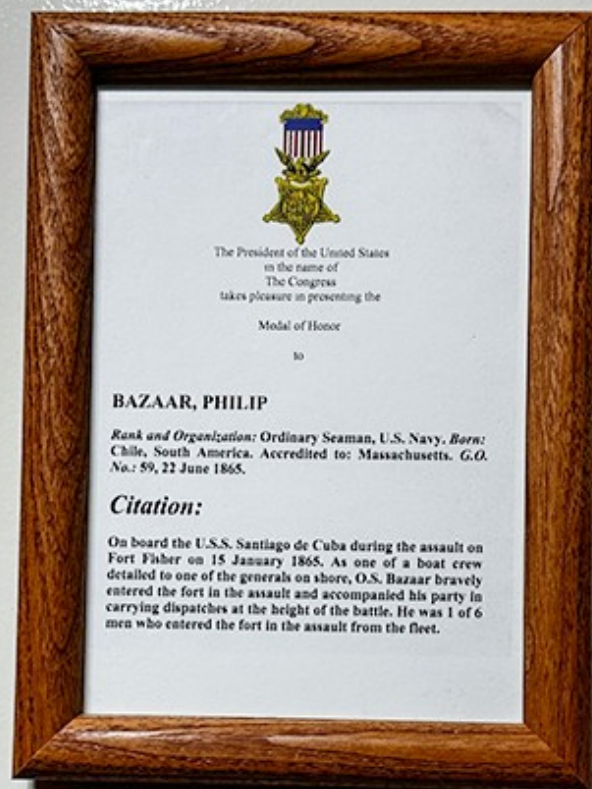
Steven Richard photo.

The first Medal of Honor recipient is William P Brownell who

was born in New York on July 12th, 1839 and died in New York on April 26th, 1915. He is buried in OAK GROVE CEMETERY (MH) (GG-31), NEW BEDFORD, MA, UNITED STATES.

- **RANK:** COXSWAIN (HIGHEST RANK: ACTING MASTER'S MATE)
- **CONFLICT/ERA:** U.S. CIVIL WAR
- **UNIT/COMMAND:** U.S.S. BENTON
- **MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH:** U.S. NAVY
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION DATE:** MAY 22, 1863
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION PLACE:** GREAT GULF BAY & VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI, USA

“Served as coxswain on board the U.S.S. Benton during the attack on Great Gulf Bay, 2 May 1863, and Vicksburg, 22 May 1863. Carrying out his duties with coolness and courage, Brownell served gallantly against the enemy as captain of a 9-inch gun in the attacks on Great Gulf and Vicksburg and as a member of the Battery Benton before Vicksburg.”



PHILIP BAZAAR

One of six sailors on board the USS Santiago de Cuba who was part of a land assault on Fort Fisher

Steven Richard photo.

The next Medal of Honor recipient is Philip Bazaar who was born in Chile with no birth date available and died on December 28th, 1923 in New York City. He is buried in CALVARY CEMETERY (BURIED AS BAZAN), NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES and his award is accredited to New Bedford, MA.

- **ALSO KNOWN AS:** BAZAN, PHILIP
- **RANK:** ORDINARY SEAMAN
- **CONFLICT/ERA:** U.S. CIVIL WAR
- **UNIT/COMMAND:** U.S.S. SANTIAGO DE CUBA
- **MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH:** U.S. NAVY
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION DATE:** JANUARY 15, 1865
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION PLACE:** FORT FISHER, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

“On board the U.S.S. Santiago de Cuba during the assault on Fort Fisher on 15 January 1865. As one of a boat crew detailed to one of the generals onshore, O.S. Bazaar bravely entered the fort in the assault and accompanied his party in carrying dispatches at the height of the battle. He was one of six men who entered the fort in the assault from the fleet.”

I'm sure historians have searched endlessly for photographs of these gentlemen, so I know it is a long shot to find any photographs or paintings. But if there are any in existence, I would have to believe they would exist stored away in the attic of a south coast families home who has no idea that they are holding on to a piece of American history.

How New Bedford's William H. Carney became an American Hero, first black Medal of Honor recipient

Buried in the Oak Grove cemetery in New Bedford, Massachusetts is an American Hero whose legend should be taught in history books across the country. Army Sgt. William H. Carney is the first African American recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Serving on the legendary Massachusetts 54th regiment in the Civil War, he earned the Medal of Honor during the “Charge of Fort Wagner”. When the unit's color guard was killed, Carney stepped forth, picked up the American flag, and rallied his troops up the hill towards almost certain death. It's important to emphasize that 270 of the 600 members of the 54th regiment were killed in this battle. These men truly embodied

what it meant to “Live free or die”.

With the flag in his hand, Carney was shot several times, yet refused to let the flag hit the ground. He planted the flag at the base of the fort and held it upright until his nearly lifeless body was rescued.

Miraculously, he survived, and when rescued he looked up at his fellow soldiers and told them, “Boys, the old flag never touched the ground”. Check out this video highlighting the moment William Carney earned his medal of honor.

Historical displays in disrepair or outright destroyed at Fort Taber draw ire of New Bedford veterans

On Wednesday afternoon I paid a visit to the military museum at Fort Rodman in New Bedford. This is an amazing place to get lost in history, and if you are from the area you might even see memorabilia of an old family member which you did not know existed. I stumbled upon a photo of my uncle who served in Korea!

While there are endless stories I plan to cover, I felt obligated to address the concerns of the veterans who volunteer at the museum. When I told them I am a local journalist, every single volunteer pleaded that I help them get the signs repaired at the Fort. It’s a simple request, yet they have had no luck getting the City of New Bedford to

complete this task.

When leaving the museum I asked myself, "How bad could these signs really be?" As I walked out the door one volunteer who is also a Vietnam veteran, gave me his final pitch and told me to go take a look for myself.

I took a walk along Fort Taber and snapped some photos of the displays which should stand as an educational resource to teach the public about the rich history of New Bedford. I will just post the photos and let you decide if these displays are something to be proud of...



Steven Richard photo.



Steven Richard photo.



Steven Richard photo.



Steven Richard photo.