

Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Flag Honors WWII Veteran Herbert H. Blake

During the month of February, the 18th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of PFC Herbert H. Blake, of New Bedford, who served in the European Theater during WWII.

Blake was inducted into the United States Army on May 29, 1944 and served with the 4410th Quartermaster Service Company as a truck driver and shipping clerk until his discharge on August 25, 1945. “He left his wife and two small children to join many brave souls to fight to end the war,” stated his granddaughter, Lee Blake of the New Bedford Historical Society.

During his time in the military, PFC Blake served in Germany and Belgium, where “he met families who appreciated his sacrifice and service. He received several letters from Belgium families he met during his service who appreciated his sacrifice and service. The grateful families asked him to visit to see how beautiful their country was now that the war was over. Those letters were dear to his heart and he passed them down to his family members,” according to his granddaughter, Lee.

PFC Blake was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the WWII Victory Medal and the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Ribbon.

Upon returning from his service with the U.S. Army, Herbert began his service as a United States Postal worker. He worked for the New Bedford Postal Office, delivering mail to the West End, until his retirement. After retirement, he worked as a sexton at the Pilgrim United Church.

Blake was proud of his heritage as a Wampanoag Native American and according to his family, worked on both the Bristol County Indian Council and the Wampanoag Indian Council, as well as many other committees, working to gain visibility for the Wampanoag people.

He was also a member of the Andrews-Dahill Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1531.

Herbert was a talented writer and poet and delighted in having his poetry published in the local papers and read on local radio stations. Below is a poem he penned during WWII for the Centennial of New Bedford, which was published in the Standard-Times on June 25, 1947.

*Grand old town beside the sea,
This week our hearts go out to thee
For you've withstood, mid strife and fears,
The world's events for a hundred years*

Out from your port, brave men did sail
To seek and catch the mighty whale.
Great mills and plants within abound,
That turn out goods known world around.

You've weathered many a seaboard storm,
Hurricanes and gales of every form.
Your sons are stalwart, brave and true,
They're proud to be a part of you.

You're all dressed up for this gala fete,
Flags are draped in every street.
But still we feel a deeper touch
For the grand old town we love so much.

Blake was the son of the late Thomas and Emma (Piper) Blake, who were married in 1899. Herbert resided at 117 Tremont Street, New Bedford, along with his 9 siblings.

Herbert Blake passed away on February 15, 1988 at the age

of 77. He was predeceased by his wife Ruth (Brown) Blake, with whom he was married for 49 years. They had four children: Nayland Blake of Virginia, Rosalyn Hand of New York as well as the late Donald Blake and Kathleen Blake. Herbert was also the father of Peggy Carr of California. He was also the brother of the late Thomas and John Blake, Marguerite White, Beatrice Hammond, Ruth Payne and Emma Reed as well as nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Linda Ferreira, of **Empire Ford of New Bedford**, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford of New Bedford. 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@buyempireautogroup.com.