

# **New Bedford's Fort Taber Flag Honors U.S. Navy Veteran George P. Randall**

During the month of June, the 45th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of George Pierce Randall of Mattapoisett, who passed away on December 31, 2022 at the age of 93. George, who was affectionately called “Porgie,” served as a Machinist Apprentice in the United States Navy during the Korean War.

George was born on March 15, 1929 in New Bedford, MA, son of the late Jeremiah L. and Lillian I. (Ingalls) Randall. George called Mattapoisett his home and spent most of his life living and working in the town he loved. He enlisted in the United States Navy on August 21, 1950. Randall served a total of three years, nine months and 26 days, with the majority of his time spent either at sea or abroad. Upon completing duty, Randall was awarded the National Defense Service Medal and the Navy Occupation Service Medal with European clasp.

Throughout the years, George was employed as a farmer on the family farm, located on Randall Lane in Mattapoisett. He also worked as a logger, while living in Oregon, before coming back home to Mattapoisett and working as a long-distance truck driver. During his later years, he worked as a heavy equipment operator for the town of Mattapoisett until his retirement.

“Porgie” absolutely loved his hometown of Mattapoisett and was named “Mattapoisett Man of the Year” in 2007 by the Standard-Times. According to the article, Randall’s “biggest accomplishment that year was undoubtedly his successful fight to preserve the Mattapoisett town seal after a proposal from the selectmen to render it more historically and politically correct.” He felt it was important to maintain the original

town seal. "After researching the seal's history at the Town Hall, Mr. Randall spent days circulating a petition to preserve the seal; he wrote letters to the editor and bought a two-page ad in the local weekly citing his objections to the proposed change." The article was placed on the warrant for the Town Meeting and the town voted 124-26 to keep the seal as is.

Randall fought to preserve the history and hometown feel of the town he loved. "I can remember going down the wharf in a wagon with my father to load lambs for the Vineyard onto the Alice Wentworth, an old schooner that came into Mattapoisett all the time," he recalled. He explained that the changes taking place in the town were worrying him. "They keep raising taxes and the kids are moving out. Families that are here four or five generations and their kids have to go to Wareham to get a house. The old names in town are disappearing. My father used to sell land for \$10 an acre. 'How many acres you want?' he used to say. Not anymore. It's sad."

Randall was an active participant in town politics. "George never missed a Town Meeting or vote," explained Judy Anthony, a family friend who was quoted in a previous Standard-Times article. "Everything he does is for the good of the town. He has a heart bigger than himself. You may not agree with him, but he never does it for himself. He just loves Mattapoisett."

In fact, at the "young" age of 80, George P. Randall, he was elected Selectman of the town of Mattapoisett. His campaign slogan "Common man, common cause, common sense," earned him many supporters.

Randall's daughter, Marcia, recalled how her dad was proud to be a veteran. He was "honored to take part in Memorial and Veterans Day ceremonies, where he would recite the Gettysburg Address from memory."

Randall was a lifetime member and Post Commander of the

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2982 in Fairhaven, a member of the American Legion Florence Eastman Post #280 and Fairhaven Post #166, John Day Elks Lodge #1824 and the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Lakeville. He was also a leader in the Agricultural Grange of Mattapoisett.

Survivors include his three daughters: Cheryl Randall-Mach and her husband Steven of Mattapoisett, Marcia Randall-Thorne and her husband Joseph of Egg Harbor, NJ and Cristal Medeiros and her husband Steven of Dartmouth; a sister, Eunice Stoleki of Sturbridge, 2 grandsons: Pierce Randall and Jack Medeiros; his Godchild, Valerie Nichols; and many nieces and nephews. He was the companion of the late Elaine Vandament and the brother of the late Lewis (Pat) Randall, Leonard Randall and Geraldine Stewart.

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](mailto:lferreira@buyempireautogroup.com).