

DELANDINGS



JULY 2017—JACK FORTES

WWII DeLAND NAS VETERAN

Remembering WWII Veteran



**DNAS WWII VETERAN
UNITED STATES NAVY
PARACHUTE LOFT RIGGER
1945-1946**



Jack F. Fortes
March 20, 1924 - July 2, 2017



With great sadness, the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Volunteers grieve the loss of Jack Fortes, WWII DeLand Naval Air Station Veteran and founding member of the museum 23 years ago. Jack, age 93, passed away on July 2, 2017. We send our most heartfelt condolences to his family.

Jack Fortes was stationed at the DeLand Naval Air Base during WWII 1945-1946, assigned to the Parachute Loft, rigging and packing parachutes. Upon his discharge from the US Navy, he had a successful business career working as a journalist for several large metropolitan newspapers, including the Daytona Beach News Journal. He was an occasional contributor for the West Volusia Beacon Newspaper. After many years of service, he retired as the Public Relations and Information Director for Stetson University in DeLand, Florida.

Jack loved DeLand and was active in the community. He served on many boards and event committees over the years. He was a member lifetime member of the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum serving as Publicity Chair, Hangar Dance Chair, Treasurer and Board Director. He served as a museum tour guide, sharing his knowledge with visitors from local, statewide, national and international destinations. There is a great video on YouTube of Jack giving a tour of the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum in 2015. The link is:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0J25zYyGIo—the title is DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, DeLand, Florida 10/15/2015.

Other memberships included Volusia Flagler YMCA, DeLand Breakfast Rotary Club, West Volusia Historical Society and the Great Expectations Men's Choir. He had a great passion for 1940's era Big Band Music. We will remember him dancing the night away during our Big Band Dances. He was a key member of the dance committee every year and attended all of the past 25 years. He enjoyed many cruises with a Big Band Music theme. In May of 2010, Jack flew to England to attend the VE Day celebrations Memphis Belle Hangar Dance at the Tower Museum Bassingbourn Airfield UK. He was interviewed by a local TV station in England and that interview can be viewed on YouTube. The link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKzSJr0ASVM>, titled Silver Surfers—Jack Fortes—US Navy WWII Veteran.

We will miss his fast paced energy and his great smile.



In Jack's Own Words.....

Quite a few years ago, Jack put in writing his recollections about being stationed in DeLand, Florida during WWII as follows:

"Most likely, it was a cool day in January 1945, when a young sailor, just shy of his 21st birthday, showed up at the DeLand Naval Air Station, assigned to the Parachute Loft. And probably, it was another cold day — Jan. 17, 1946 — when I traveled to Jacksonville for honorable discharge from the United States Navy after three years, four months and 17 days of military service during World War II. Memories are short of most of the duty I pulled in the 12 months I was stationed at DeLand NAS. I can tell more about the "liberty" or weekend trips to Orlando, Daytona Beach, or even Lake County (there was a quiet, secret place some of us knew).

On base, my assignment was to spend day after day packing parachutes. I stood on one side of a long table (a partner was on the other side) with the 'chute stretched out, waiting to be folded carefully into a canvas wrapper, which became a seat pack for the pilots and crewmen. On top of the parachute, under a small flap, was a metal pin attached to the rip cord, and with one pull, the parachute was supposed to open. As far as I know, every attempted opening worked!

We ate in the mess hall and paid a little bit for sodas and snacks in the soda shop. We went to movies and participated in certain required drills. The Ship's Service jukebox played "Juke Box Saturday Night" by Glenn Miller, and other tunes by Miller and other popular bands. They included Harry James' "I Had the Craziest Dream," Tommy Dorsey's "Sentimental Journey," and several boogie tunes and specialties like "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens" and "Hey Bob a Ree Bob." Favorite hangouts on liberty were the Pier Nightclub and the Martinique in Daytona Beach.

We would hear about an occasional airplane crash in nearby woods. In recent years, we have learned some 60 deaths were recorded during the years 1942-46. The SBD was the primary aircraft used for training in DeLand, and we are proud of its record, especially in decisive battles like Midway.

I am proud to serve at the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum and was part of the dedication ceremony on Nov. 17, 1995, when the museum was opened. I was also proud to serve with other DNAS vets, including museum President Dale Alexander, members Ken Torbett and Bob Sanford. Our small work force produced many Big Band Hangar Dances and Veterans Day Parades. Our future is bright, even with the advancing ages of the museum's nucleus of volunteers. In our lifetime, we hope to see a new hangar and an Aeronautical Aviation Center behind the current museum. A hurricane or two damaged us, but did not knock us out. "

"Onward We Go"

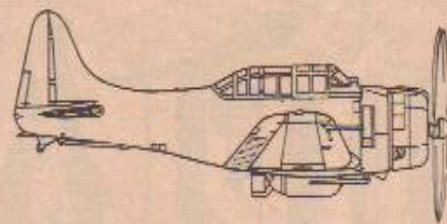


11/11/1995: (Left) DNAS VETERAN JACK FORTES TAKING PHOTOS AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE DeLAND NAVAL AIR STATION MUSEUM OPENING.

(Middle) JACK SERVED ON THE FIRST DNASM BOARD OF DIRECTORS. (NEXT TO ELLWOOD TITCOMB, FIRST DNASM PRESIDENT), BILL DREGGORS, ED CARSON, BO DAVENPORT, KEN TORBETT AND ADELE PRICE.

(Below)

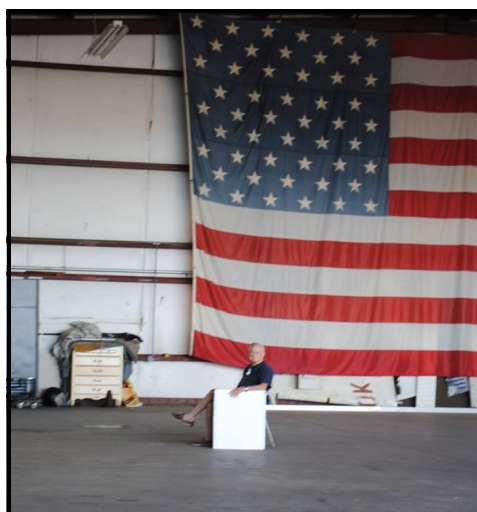
JACK WITH OTHER DNAS WWII VETERANS AT THE MUSEUM GRAND OPENING in 1995.



DeLand NAS veterans who attended the dedication of the Museum included those shown at the left. Left to right are Dale Alexander, Bob Freeburg, R. H. Baldwin, Jack Fortes, Monte Westberry, Nelson Root, Joe Dalton, Bob Sanford, Ken Torbett, Harry Brown, and Niven Thompson.



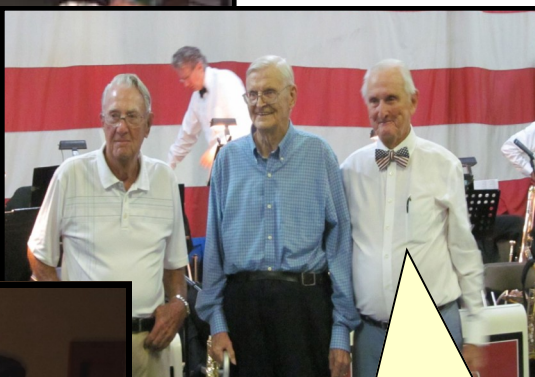
Jack Fortes celebrated his 92nd birthday by traveling on a Harry James Orchestra Cruise. He had a great time and was able to visit Portugal, Spain and Rome, Italy. Jack had a great passion for the 1940's era Big Band Music and he loved to share his knowledge and experiences with community groups. He helped plan the first Big Band Hangar Dance and helped set up and attended the event for 25 years. Before he passed, he was assisting with the details of the 26th Big Band Dance that is scheduled for 11/10/2017.



Jack was always the first to arrive for dance set up day. He brought his seating chart and his chalk to mark the floor.

He loved to share his passion for Big Band Music with community groups and senior living centers.

At the 2016 Big Band Dance, Jack won the spa manicure/pedicure prize!



At the 2015 Big Band Dance, Jack was honored along with his great friends and fellow DNAS WWII Veterans, Virgil Linder and the late Ken Torbett who passed away on July 10, 2016.

- Jack Fortes sang for many years with the Great Expectations Men's Choir, performing in the community and special events.
- He participated in the first City Hall Commission meeting reenactment during the 125th City of DeLand Founders Day at the new City Hall.
- He enjoyed skydiving to celebrate his birthday milestones. His last jump was with his grandson which was very special to him.
- He was a member of the West Volusia Historical Society Board of Directors for many years and participated in their events, even dressed as Santa's Elf for Bill and Irene Dreggors.



- Jack volunteered as a tour guide for the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum. He loved to share history with young visitors.
- He helped during the DNASM SCCA Race fundraisers.
- As Publicity Director for DNASM, he was always checking on projects to develop a story for the newsletter.
- Jack was able to attend the DNASM April 22, 2017 Ribbon Cutting for the new Ronald N. Herman Assembly Pavilion and the rollout of the restored TBF Avenger Torpedo Bomber. He was very proud of our student volunteers and also very pleased to visit with his fellow DNAS WWII Veteran and great friend Virgil Linder. He attended Veteran ceremonies with other DNASM Members every year.



Even though he had just been released from the hospital, Jack was able to attend the 2017 Memorial Day Service at Bill Dreggors Park where he was recognized as a WWII Veteran. He attended this service every year and it was very important to him.



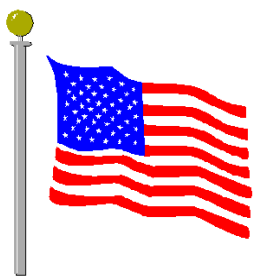
macon memories



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**So Long Jack, You Were A Grand Marshall and A Great Friend.
We Hope You Will Always Be Surrounded by Your Favorite Song
"Moonlight Serenade"**



DeLand Naval Air Station Museum
910 Biscayne Boulevard
DeLand, Florida 32724
(386) 738-4149
www.delandnavalairmuseum.org



"In Memory of All Who Served"