



The 4th and 5th grade choir of Middlesex Elementary School sings the National Anthem at the veterans luncheon hosted on November 9 by the Episcopal Church Women of Christ Church Parish.

Museums of Middlesex produces film on local decorated veterans

by Bill Powell

The Museums of Middlesex (MOM) has completed the filming and editing of interviews profiling five Middlesex County decorated veterans: Raymond W. Burrell and Norton Hurd and family members of Beryl Newman, George A. Taylor and Lewis "Chesty" Puller. The filming, interviews and production were made possible by MOM's successful grant application to, and funding from, the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

The premier of this film, "Homegrown Heroes: Stories of Middlesex County's Greatest Generation," was part of the Friday, November 9, veterans luncheon hosted by Christ Church Parish. In only its second year, the luncheon was filled to capacity with over 100 veterans and guests attending.

The Museums of Middlesex LLC was formed in 2015 as an umbrella organization to link the three county museums for the purpose of promoting tourism in Middlesex. The three partnering museums are the Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society in Saluda, Urbanna Museum, and Deltaville Maritime Museum & Holly Point Nature Park. MOM works closely with the Middlesex County Tourism Department, and its director, Michelle Brown. The veterans film is just one of the projects MOM is pursuing in its ongoing mission, using multi-applicant grants, to promote the three Middlesex museums, visitor centers and the county's rich 350 years of history.

Five hours of in-depth interviews were conducted to produce this short film. Southside Sentinel reporters Tom Chillemi and Larry Chowning assisted.

The film can be viewed in the libraries and archives of the three museums during open hours. The short film can

also now be seen on MOM's website and, through MOM, the DVD will be available to groups.

The decorated veterans in the film are:

- Private Raymond W. Burrell Sr.—During WWII, Raymond Burrell served with the famous 761st Tank Battalion, known as the "Black Panthers," composed entirely of African-American men. On November 4, 1944, General Patton sent the 761st on a deployment of 183 days of continual fighting in very harsh weather. The 761st was outstanding, causing thousands of enemy casualties, capturing or aiding in liberating over 30 major towns, aiding in capturing/destroying 4 airfields, 3 supply dumps, 461 wheeled vehicles, 34 tanks, 131 large guns and a radio station. In 1978 President Carter awarded the 761st the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism.

- Captain Beryl Richard "Dick" Newman (deceased)—Beryl Newman served in the 133rd Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division of the US Army. Near Cisterna, Italy, on May 26, 1944, Newman single-handedly advanced on two German machine gun nests, destroying three enemy machine gun nests, killing two Germans, wounding two and taking 11 prisoners. He was awarded the Medal of Honor by General Order #5 on January 15, 1945. He is buried in Remlik, Middlesex County.

- Lieutenant Norton Hurd—Norton Hurd was a member of the "Hell Razors" headed to Guam in the legendary aircraft carrier "Wasp." He flew in the first group of Navy planes to bomb Tokyo. Near Chi-Chi Jima, Lieutenant Hurd's engine failed after a battle with a Japanese fighter, which he shot down. His plane crashed into the Pacific. As his plane began to sink, he went into the water

with only a life preserver and a whistle. Lieutenant Hurd was finally rescued and returned to the Wasp. Lieutenant Hurd was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, which is given to those who demonstrate heroism.

- Lieutenant General Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller (deceased)—General Puller is the most decorated Marine, receiving five Navy Crosses, a Distinguished Service Cross awarded from the U.S. Army, a Silver Star Medal, 2 Legion of Merit Combat "V" awards, Purple Heart Medal and 3 Air Medals. He served in the United States Marine Corps, fighting with distinction in World War II and the Korean War. After 37 years of service, General Puller retired in 1955 returning to Middlesex County. He is buried at Christ Church Parish near Saluda.

- George A. Taylor (deceased)—Born in Middlesex County, George Taylor became one of the original members of a segregated Army Air Force unit at the Tuskegee Army Flying School in Alabama. "He was a true fighter pilot," said Quentin Smith, a fellow Tuskegee Airman. "He was the kind you want leading you or you want on your wing. If he said he was going to be there, he would be there." Mr. Taylor was awarded two Bronze Stars, an Air Medal and four battle stars and the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor in 2007.

The film was produced by Stephanie Heinatz of Conso-ciaste Media and filmed and edited by Bruce Nelson.

The Museums of Middlesex website can be accessed at www.museumsofmiddlesex.com. It also links to the three Middlesex museums, their events, the county tourism website, Virginia Oyster Trail, Virginia.org, River Realm and Virginia Oyster Country.