

## MERCER MEMORIAL DAY 500 2007 HONOREES



**JOHN GETWAY**, U.S. ARMY, RETIRED. STAFF SERGEANT.

During WWII John served with the 509<sup>th</sup> Airborne and the 82<sup>nd</sup> 504<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, one of the most elite units in the Army. He is the only surviving WWII 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Paratrooper to be awarded 5 combat stars. He also earned 2 Purple Hearts. During his military career he has jumped from altitudes as low as 250' which allowed barely enough time for a chute to open. His first two jumps were in the North Africa campaign where, on his second jump, his unit landed in enemy occupied territory. During the hand to hand combat confrontation his hand was run through by a bayonet he attempted to parry. He was also wounded several times during one of his two jumps into Italy. His final jump into Holland was a low altitude night jump. He had the misfortune of smashing into a tree where he sustained multiple injuries and dangled aloft for 3 days.



**KENNETH HEIDER** U.S. NAVY, RETIRED. PETTY OFFICER 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS

Ken's first tour of duty in WWII was in the North Atlantic on the destroyer USS Cowie. He participated in the invasion of North Africa and Sicily. He was sent to the Asiatic Pacific Campaign (China Sea) at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He was on board the USS Missouri when it was commissioned in 1944 and also witnessed the historic signing of the peace treaty in Tokyo Bay, Japan in 1945. He was in the boiler room, 36' under water when the ship was under a Kamakaze attack. Ken was called back into the navy five years later and was involved in the invasion of the port of Inchon, Korea. He believes soldiers today should fight for what they believe in.

He feels too many people today don't realize the sacrifices that were made by many to preserve our freedom.



**EDWARD HOAGLAND** US NAVY, RETIRED

On his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday he was on the USS Alshain headed for the Panama Canal, Pearl Harbor and Guam. It was a ship designed to haul Sherman tanks and landing craft. He was part of the invasion of Guam and was the last ship of the fleet to leave Guam. His time in the service produced myriad health problems that became life long challenges. He served as Director of Veterans Affairs in Mercer County for 15 years.

These honorees may be contacted through the Mercer Memorial Day 500  
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