

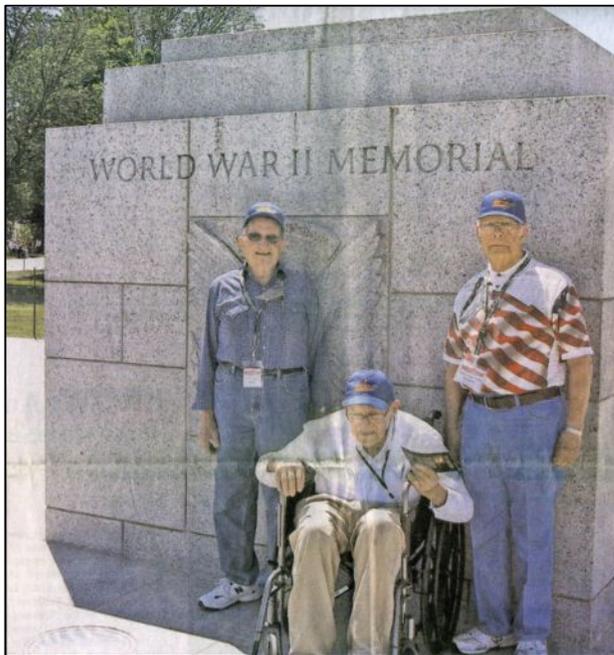
## VETERANS HONORED BY WASHINGTON TRIP

By Megan Trotter, Herald-Citizen Staff

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**COOKEVILLE** – Today Americans will be remembering those who fought and died to protect our country. Earlier this month, World War II veterans Bill Barenkamp and Fred Haney from Cookeville and Carl Walker of Fairview visited the places that honored their service and the service of their fellow soldiers at the World War II Memorial, Vietnam



and Korean War Memorials, Air Force Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

“It’s a day I’ll never forget,” said Barenkamp.

(Pictured: From left, veterans Fred Haney, Carl Walker and William Barenkamp at the WWII Memorial in Washington, D. C.)

With the help of Music City Honor Flights, a division of the honor Flight Network, a group of 102 veterans was flown to Washington, D. C., for a one-day visit to the memorials. Every

aspect of their trip was taken care of for them, from the cost of the airline ticket to all their meals. Each veteran had a caregiver to take care of his or her needs, make sure they did not pay for anything themselves aside from souvenirs, and make sure they enjoyed their day to the fullest.

“They tell us there are somewhere between 1,00 to 1,400 veterans from World War II that are dying every day. They’re becoming an extinct group of soldiers,” said Ken Haney, Fred’s son, who was the caregiver for his father and the other two local veterans on the trip.

Barenkamp was a captain in the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, which served at St. LO and Mortain in France. It was the first infantry division to enter Belgium and The Netherlands, and was instrumental in capturing the first large German city captured by the Allies during WWII. Barenkamp served for four and a half years, 21 months of which were in combat. He is now a substitute teacher for special education classes for Putnam County children in kindergarten through high school.

Haney was a member of the 165<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion in Europe, which participated in the Central Pacific, Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons and Luzon campaigns. He served for two and a half years.

On the way to the memorials, the veterans got the chance to visit with each other and trade war stories.

“We got to sort of embellish our accomplishments. You know, like ‘The fish I caught (was this big),’” laughed Barenkamp.

While exploring the World War II memorial dedicated to them, the veterans also were surprised by the respect shown to them by groups of school children who were there on field trips. Many of the teenagers walked up to the men, asked if they were veterans and



thanked them for their service. Some of the students even kissed the hands of the visiting veterans.

“We were honored and respected the entire time,” said Barenkamp.

“Just like the Unknown Soldiers were,” added Haney. “We were shown the same honor and respect.”

(Pictured: Fred Haney, left, and William Barenkamp).

Both Barenkamp and Haney said they had a wonderful time on the trip, but their favorite part was when they landed in Nashville on the way home. As they exited the plane, they were met with several hundred cheering people of all ages waving flags, patting them on the shoulders, giving them high-fives and sings “God Bless America.” It brought tears to many of the soldiers’ eyes.

“It was beautiful,” said Fred Haney.

\*Read more about the people and History of Putnam Co., TN and surrounding areas at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>