

A Special Tribute to Our Military Personnel



“The Only Thing You Have to Fear...”

Excerpt from History of Boylston, 1886-1979 by William O. Dupuis, M.A.

National Events — World War II

The nation was still groggy from the financial disaster of 1929, when yet another major crisis appeared to test our resolve. Every person who was old enough to remember knows exactly what he or she was doing on that fateful Sunday afternoon of December 7, 1941. As I recall, my family was listening to the Longine Symphonette program on the radio when the excited voice of an announcer broke the calm of that Sabbath with the electrifying announcement that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. We were at war! Fear and anger gripped us all, yet F.D.R’s [Franklin Deleno Roosevelt, President of the United States] words, ‘You have nothing to fear, but fear itself’ remained our surest defense against despair and panic.

Young men and women from Boylston once again marched off to war. A Civil Defense program was initiated, and in 1943, a ‘War Pricing and Rationing Board’ was set up in town. On August 26, 1943, the town gathered in front of the Library to repeat a ceremony held some 24 years before. Another Honor Roll was dedicated, bearing the names of 90 service men and women.

Boylston had been fortunate indeed. Not since the Civil War had this town suffered the loss of any of its sons in battle. This worldwide conflict ended this good fortune, and claimed the lives of 3 native sons:

George L. Button died of wounds on Pelelin Island, November 17, 1944,
John Barton killed in action in Germany, March, 1945,
William H. Brown killed in action in Italy, April 17, 1945.



OBITUARY

George L. Button

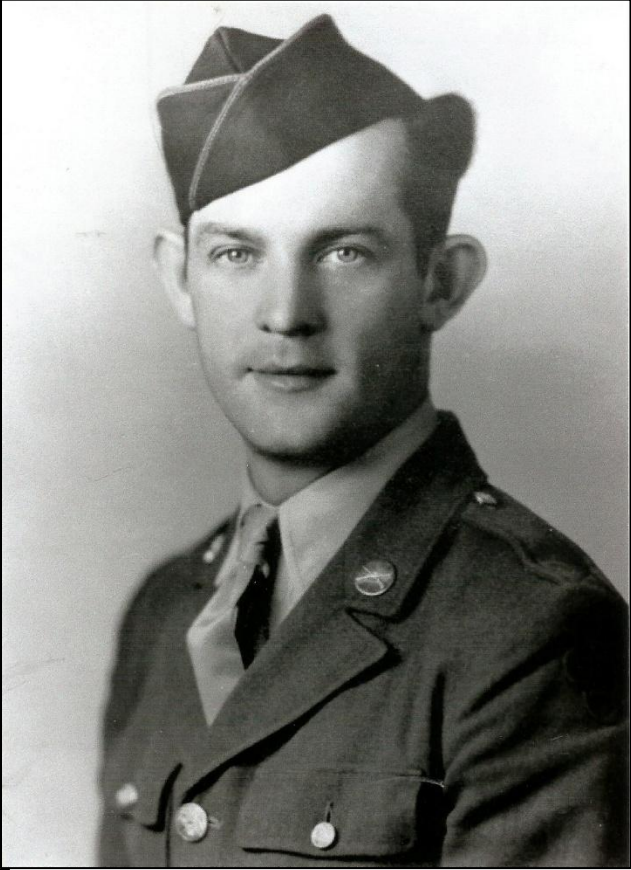
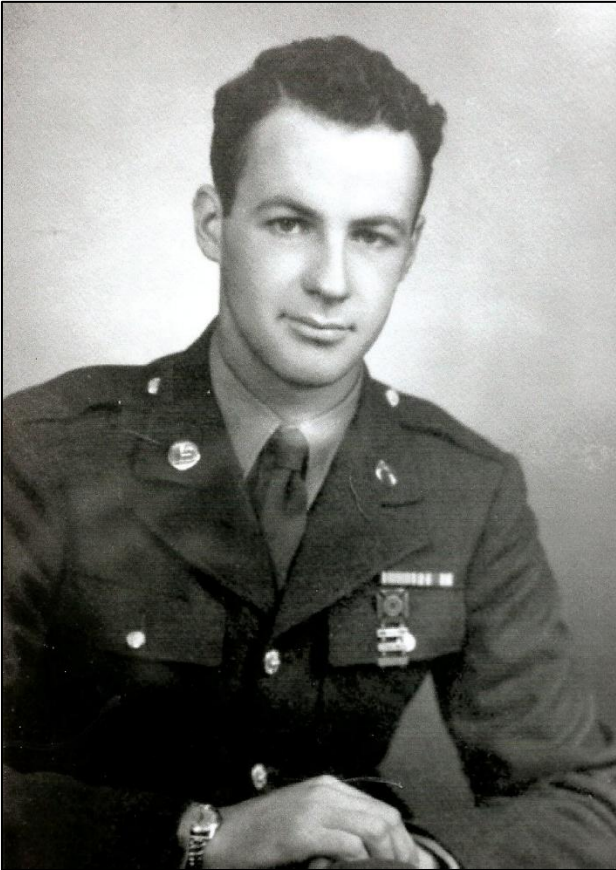
Military services will be conducted Sunday at 3 p. m., at the graveside in Winter Beach cemetery for Pfc. George L. Button, 32, who was killed in action on November 17, 1944 on Pelelin island in the Pacific. The body arrived here last Tuesday from overseas.

Pfc. Button was with Company L, 323rd infantry. He had lived in Vero Beach six months prior to joining the Army, coming to Vero Beach from Worcester, Mass.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Ruth L. Button, Vero Beach; his mother, Mrs. Julia Button, Worcester, Mass.; his father, O. L. Button, Worcester, Mass.; two sisters, Mrs. Nellie Gallagher, Arlington, Mass., and Mrs. Jennie Chiarelli, Boylston, Mass.; and a brother, Louis Button.

PFC GEORGE LELAND BUTTON (front center)
Born 27 November 1911 – Died of Wounds 17 November 1944
Son of Irving Louis Button & Julia A. Durand
Linden Street, Boylston, Massachusetts
Photograph Collections-Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc.

OBITUARY
PFC GEORGE L. BUTTON
15 October 1948
Indian River Press Journal



PFC JOHN BARTON
Born 19 November 1923 – Killed in Action 22 March 1945
Son of George Sumner Barton & Elizabeth Trumball
Boylston, Massachusetts
Photograph Collections-Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc.

PFC WILLIAM HAROLD BROWN
Born 30 December 1917 – Killed in Action 17 April 1945
Son of Elmer Brown & Honora Moriarty
Stockton Street, Boylston, Massachusetts
Photograph Collections-Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc.

In all, 156 Boylstonians served the nation honorably, fighting in every theater of operation, and contributing to final victory in 1945. As was our custom, the town prepared a ‘Welcome Home’ celebration for the returning veterans. Organized by the Boylston Police Association, the festivities were held on July 5 and 6, 1946.

On Friday, the 5th, a ‘Welcome Home Ball’ was held at the Town House, with dancing to Morty Gould’s Orchestra, from 8 to 12. On Saturday the 6th, church services were held at the Congregational Church at 9:45 AM, with the Rev. Robert MacLeod presiding, and at 8:30AM at St. Mary’s, with Rev. Father O’Connell celebrating Mass. At 11:00am a sports program was held on the Common, followed at 1:30pm by a parade. Thanksgiving exercises took place at 2:30, with John S. Maynard as Master of Ceremonies, and His Excellency Governor Maurice Tobin as guest speaker. From 4 to 6, a band concert was presented by the Worcester Brass Band, with a banquet following at the Town House beginning at 6:00 pm. Outdoor movies were shown at 8:30, and the day’s events concluded with a fireworks display at 10:00. It is the last such celebration ever held in Boylston; neither our Korean, nor our Viet-Nam veterans were so honored. I leave it to future historians to decipher why.



At the present time, the Boylston Historical Museum, Inc. invites you to peruse the display honoring this conflict and that of a serviceman from Boylston named, John L. Brigham along with his family who were survivors of that fateful day when Pearl Harbor was bombed.

SEAMAN JOHN LAWRENCE BRIGHAM

*United States Navy
Pearl Harbor Survivor
Born 24 February 1917- Died 15 June 1983
Walter G. Brigham and Lucy Bemis
Photograph Collections-Boylston Historical Society &
Museum, Inc.*

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Editor, Nancy O’Loughlin Filgate, Director and Curator, Boylston Historical Society and Museum, Inc., 7 Central Street, Boylston, Massachusetts

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