



No portion of this article may be reproduced without  
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.

©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group

P.O. Box 1676

Frisco, Texas 75034

Phone: 972.335.1181

Toll Free: 877.781.7067

Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: [info@friscostyle.com](mailto:info@friscostyle.com)

Web: [www.friscostyle.com](http://www.friscostyle.com)

**Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306**



Brigadier General Robert E. Galer, receiving medal of honor from FDR and with his airplane, Barbara Jane. photos courtesy of R.E. Galer Library

# remember all our heroes this memorial day

by amanda vancura

AS MEMORIAL DAY APPROACHES, it's a time not only to remember the heroes of the present, but also those heroes who have helped protect our freedom in years past. While there are many members of the military – both current and retired – right here in the Metroplex, one of particular note is Brigadier General Robert E. Galer.

A former Frisco resident, Galer is no stranger to fighting for freedom. He has received the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award for bravery in combat, as well as the Navy Cross, the second-highest medal, as a Marine fighter pilot in the air battles over Guadalcanal in 1942. This World War II ace had 13 confirmed aerial victories and was shot down four times.

Aside from his medals, his military accomplishments have also earned him recognition in his own community. In January, the Big "D" Young Marines opened the Brig. Gen. Robert E.

Galer Marine Multi-Purpose Center in Dallas. This community center provides permanent offices for veterans' organizations and houses the Big "D" Young Marines, a local unit of the National Young Marines.

While his achievements are many, his wife, Sharon, says that if it weren't for the people who continually want to recognize him, she would never know about his military successes. "He is very unassuming," she says. "He's the kindest, sweetest person and always has a smile for everyone." Though he may be modest, Galer has quite a bit to be proud of.



It was the end of the depression and young Galer decided he wanted to attend college. He went to school without enough money to buy books, but worked two jobs and made his way through the University of Washington. During school, he discovered a talent as a basketball player. Although he was an accomplished player and was inducted into the NCAA, state of Washington and Husky Halls of Fame, Galer decided his true passion was to fly. Upon graduation in 1935, Galer joined the Naval Reserve Aviation Base in Seattle for flight training and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps in July 1936. The following year he was designated a Naval Aviator.

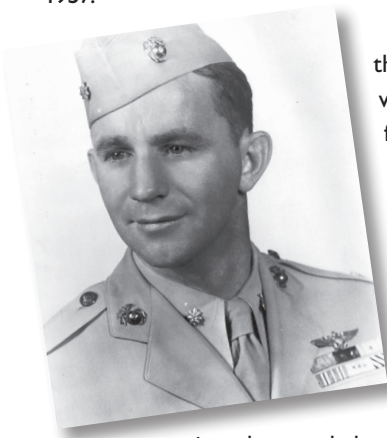
At the beginning of World War II, Galer witnessed the shock of the Japanese attack on Hawaii while stationed on Oahu. The following May 1942, he took command of Marine Fighting Squadron 224 and led it to Guadalcanal for a bloody fight that stopped the Japanese advance in the South Pacific. Galer individually shot down 11

*"He was under fire, behind enemy lines and badly injured."*



enemy bomber and fighter aircraft over a period of 29 days. The squadron, under his inspiring leadership, shot down a total of 27 Japanese planes. In recognition of his actions at Guadalcanal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented him with the Medal of Honor in March 1943 "for conspicuous heroism and courage above and beyond the call of duty."

Galer's military achievements don't end there. In addition to several command and staff assignments, he also went to Korea where he led many missions, including several maximum effort air strikes against heavily defended targets in North Korea. In 1952, his aircraft was hit by ground fire. Although he bailed out, he became entangled in his F4U Corsair. He managed to escape his diving aircraft and open his parachute only 150 feet above ground. He was under fire, behind enemy lines and badly injured. One hundred miles deep in enemy territory, he was eventually rescued by an alert U.S. Navy helicopter crew. Galer recovered in the States and continued his service. For his exceptional service in combat, he was promoted to Brigadier General upon retirement in 1957.



After retiring from the military Galer later worked as Vice President for Engineering with Ling Temco Vought. Now officially retired, Galer and his wife live in Dallas.

This Memorial Day, our thoughts are with those men and women who are currently fighting in Iraq and who are stationed around the world. But let's not forget those who got us where we are today. Those like Galer who also put their lives on the line in the name of freedom.

*Amanda VanCura is a freelance writer living in Plano.*