

At the Intersection of History

The Johns Creek Veterans Association held a special induction of its newest member, John White Bostian at their monthly meeting. Mr. Bostian is a 98 year-old World War Two veteran who served in the United States Navy as an Engineering Officer. Mr. Bostian was escorted by his daughter Barbara and her husband, Dave Nichols.

He entered active service under the "V-7" Program, a commissioning program that produced Navy Ensigns after three months of military training – the 90-Day Wonders. Initially assigned to the *USS Arkansas* (BB-33), Mr. Bostian participated in convoy escort duties, first to North Africa, then to Great Britain. In 1944, he transferred to the Pacific Theatre where he served aboard the Essex-class aircraft carrier, the *USS Franklin* (CV-13) as B Division Officer in charge of over 230 sailors who manned the ship's eight boilers. On March 19, 1945, while operating 60 miles from Kobe, Japan, the Franklin was struck by two 500 lb bombs dropped by enemy aircraft. The physical damage and horrific loss of life as a result of the bombs and secondary explosions from the ship's own magazines placed the ship in grave danger. Almost one third of the crew were killed, many more were injured, and fires raged throughout the ship. In what was surely "hell on earth" for the Franklin's crew, Mr. Bostian took charge of the ship's boiler room. These boilers were critical. The steam produced from the boilers propelled the vessel's four steam-turbine engines, operated the fire pumps, helped produce freshwater for the crew, and provided steam for the kitchens where the surviving crewmen would eat meals. The entire crew desperately fought to keep their ship afloat, fight the fires that raged fore-to-aft, and rescue those wounded and injured ship-wide. The Franklin, nicknamed the "Ship that Wouldn't Die" managed to remain afloat and, despite the damage, successfully steamed under its own power all the way from Japanese waters to the Brooklyn Naval Yard in New York for repairs. The Franklin did not return to wartime service by war's end. Mr. Bostian mustered out of the Navy after four years of war in October 1945.