

Lafayette Genealogical Society
General Monthly Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2019

Call to Order

The monthly meeting of the Lafayette Genealogical Society was held Thursday, January 17, 2019 in the meeting room of the South Regional Library, 1601 Johnston Street at 6:00 P.M. The meeting was called to order by President Henry Peterson. The first meeting of 2019 began with a few words of welcome to our members and guests. Attendance for the evening surpassed 40 individuals.

Approval of Previous Minutes

President Peterson announced that the minutes for the November, 2018 meeting were online and available for review on the <http://lafayettegenealogicalsociety.org> website. A motion was made, seconded and voted on affirmatively to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

As LGS treasurer, Warren Leblanc, was not in attendance, the treasurer's report was not presented.

New Business

- A motion was made, seconded and voted on affirmatively to standardize the time of all LGS monthly meetings to begin at 6:30 p.m. This becomes effective with the monthly meeting in February, 2019.

- On behalf of the Acadian Memorial located in St. Martinville, Louisiana, Tracy Frederick announced that the Acadian Memorial Heritage Festival will be held Saturday, March 16, 2019, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. Food will be available at the event. The descendants of the Benoit and Savoy families will be honored, and if anyone with those relations are interested in participating, please contact the facility. The LGS has had a table / booth at this event in the past, however, before it is determined if that participation will be repeated at this March event, the availability of volunteers needs to be determined. Volunteers are not being asked to man the table / booth for the entire time, as volunteers can be utilized in shifts. If anyone is interested in giving of their time for this activity, please email President Henry Peterson at hperterjr@cox.net
- The author of the Forensic Genealogist series of books - genealogical crime mysteries, Nathan Dylan Goodwin, has provided a link for the free download of his book "Asylum". This is a value, considering the book is for sale on Amazon. To access the download link go to:
<https://www.nathandylangoodwin.com/>
- The storage unit facility, presently used by the LGS for storage of various books and documents, has increased the monthly rental fee from \$50 to \$60. No action will be taken to terminate our lease, and the additional fee will be absorbed from our treasury funds.

Guest Speaker

The guest speaker for the evening was Albert “Buz” LeBlanc, son of Ralph LeBlanc (1921-1994).

“Ralph LeBlanc, native of Breaux Bridge, LA, was a Naval veteran of World War II. What made Ralph’s story so extraordinary was that he survived not only being at Pearl Harbor at the time of the Japanese bombing, but after the war, he also survived a traumatic airplane crash while on a military mission.

Utilizing photos, most taken by military photographers shown in a time lined powerpoint, Albert gave further details about his father’s life.

While awaiting a flight transfer by way of Pearl Harbor, Ralph happened to be at Pearl Harbor in his “whites” and was photographed with the smoke of the bombing in the background. (Photo attached) He burned his hand during this incident.

Subsequently, he was reassigned to flight school and later flew sea planes in the Philippines.

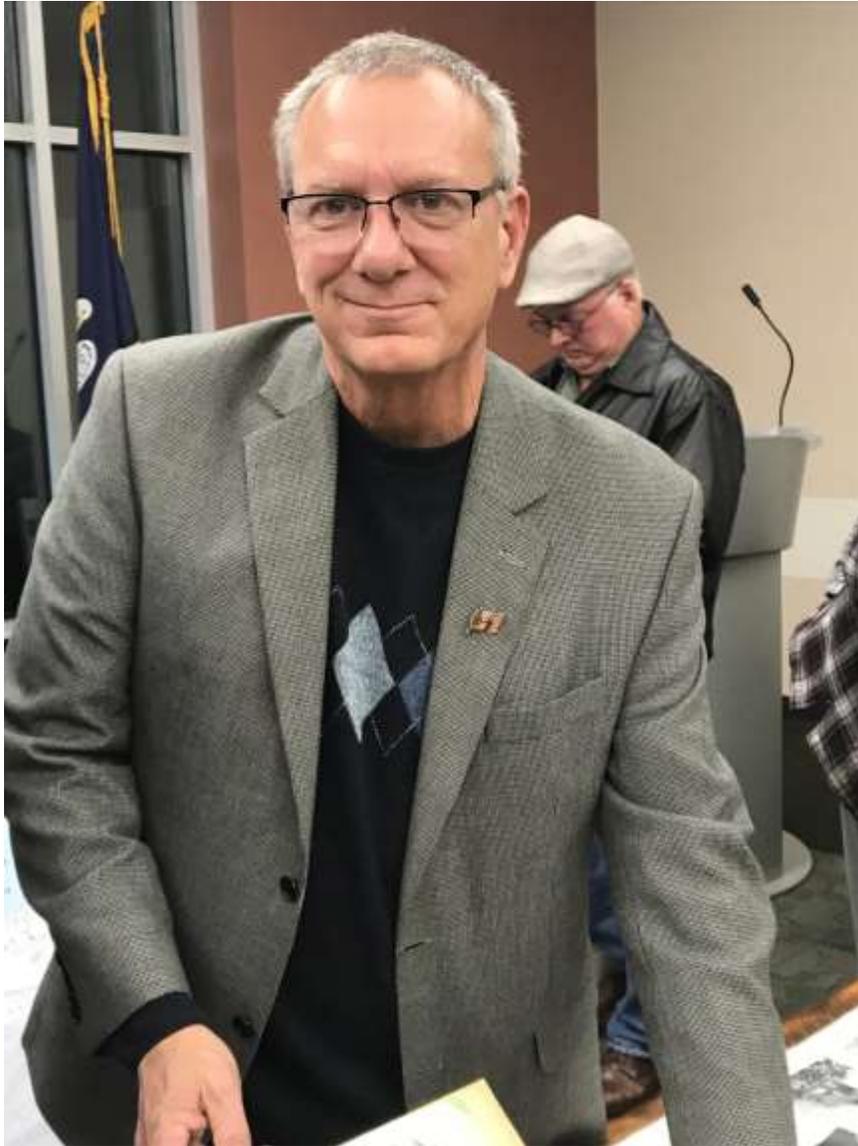
In 1946, several years after the war ended, Ralph was assigned to a United States Navy expedition code-named "Operation Highjump" to explore Antarctica and to evaluate its potential for military operations. The U.S. Navy Martin PBM-5 Mariner “George 1” crashed in severe weather with nine crew members onboard. Six of the nine survived, including Ralph. Three died instantly. Ralph was severely burned on one side of his face and body as he his seat belt was cut to release him from his inverted crashed seat. The temperature was 60 below zero and the survivors lived in the tail of the plane for days. The cold was too much for Ralph’s legs, which later had to be amputated at the knee area due to gangrene and infection.

Thirteen days after the crash, having been carried ten miles via a sled by his crewmates, the six men were rescued by seaplane. Ralph spent more than a year in the hospital recovering from his burns and other injuries, including blindness for more than 6 months. (Photo attached)

Many articles and books have been written about Ralph and his surviving such a remote plane crash. In 1948, a documentary of the Expedition entitled, "Secret Land" was produced and won the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature.



Ralph Leblanc (1921-1994)



Albert "Buz" LeBlanc, son of Ralph LeBlanc

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Labbe Boudreaux