

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



First Lieutenant Paul F. A. Wilson, Jr. B-17 Bomber Pilot WWII

Paul F. A. Wilson, Jr., a Negaunee native, was inducted into the U.S. Army Air Corps. in 1941. It was in action against the enemy in the South Pacific that he was presented the Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of the Air Medal by direction of President Roosevelt.

Lt. Wilson was a member of two planes which had started out as a flight of nine from Guadalcanal in December 24-25, 1942. Because of adverse weather, his plane and one other were able

to reach the target where they scored three direct hits and four near misses on Japanese ships. On the return flight, the two bombers, while maneuvering in a tropical storm, encountered a Japanese four-engine flying boat. The two bombers attacked the enemy flying boat from both sides, riddling it with an estimated 500 rounds of ammunition, killing the tail gunner and silencing the No. 4 engine before it disappeared in a cloud bank.

Upon his return to the states, Lt. Wilson was assigned to the Walla Walla, Washington Army Air Base. It was here that he paid tribute to the cooperation and coordinated teamwork displayed by the men of the three services, the Army, the Navy and the Marines. "Upon our arrival in the South Pacific area, we found conditions rather deplorable but this was to be

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expected. However, the men without exception accepted the hardships of that theatre with the same fine attitude traditional with Americans in past wars. In an unbelievably short time, our B-17's were landing on an airfield which had been a maze of impenetrable jungle mere days previously. This field made it possible for us to go to work on the enemy at Guadalcanal in earnest. Rendering them ineffective here meant they would be frustrated in their plan to take the New Hebrides, the Fiji Islands, New Caledonia, New Guinea, and possibly even Australia. And so it was evident they had to be stopped immediately – that was our job! Our forces went all out in the big effort and I need say no more – you all know the results. The enemy was stopped and today our forces hold Guadalcanal in its entirety. This accomplishment was realized by the heroic determination of our boys to knock the enemy off their perch.”

TJ Mudge, Apr. 2005