



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

John P. Nowhitney

JAMES L. SEWARD June 9, 2011



John P. Nowhitney

Award: Veterans' Hall of Fame

Year: 2011

United States Navy

John P. Nowhitney, Oneonta, served in the United States Navy during World War II.

Nowhitney saw service with the famed Task Force 58, and spent a great deal of his service time on board the aircraft carrier U.S.S Belleau Wood in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

Nowhitney's acts of heroism and bravery were many and he was duly recognized and decorated for such deeds.

Among the honors bestowed on Nowhitney, a presidential citation which reads in part:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against Japanese forces in the air, ashore and afloat, spearheading the concentrated carrier-warfare in forward areas, the Belleau Wood struck crushing blows toward annihilating Japanese fighting power; provided air cover for amphibious forces and inflicted terrific losses on the Japanese fleet and merchant units."

Nowhitney also recalls one particularly harrowing incident aboard the Belleau Wood:

"October 1944- we were in a battle with the Japanese fleet. Our strike force was returning. Results were good. One of our TBFs landed and taxied to the starboard side in front of the bridge. The pilot was given the signal to cut his engine and open his bomb bay. When he did out dropped a 500 pound bomb. I was the first to reach the bomb. With my bare hands, I unscrewed the detonator and heard Captain Pride's order, "Throw it over the side." I did. If it had gone off, I would probably not be here and possibly the bridge and others would have been wiped out."

It is heroic events like this that resulted in Nowhitney being awarded honors including World War II Victory Medal, Navy Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver star and four bronze stars, Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Combat Action Ribbon, and Philippine Liberation Medal with two stars.