

# Christmas Wreaths for Montevallo's Veterans

Wreath laying ceremonies will be held all over the United States at 12:00 noon on Saturday December 17, 2022. A local ceremony is scheduled for Montevallo City Cemetery at that time and will be open to the public.

by Clay Nordan  
Vice-president - Montevallo Historical Society

When I heard that graves of veterans buried in the Montevallo City Cemetery would be marked and remembered with live Christmas wreaths during the holidays this year, I knew that I wanted to help honor the service and sacrifices of four of my relatives who served in the armed forces of the United States. My father, my maternal grandfather, and two of my maternal uncles (my mother's brothers) are buried in two adjacent plots in the Montevallo City Cemetery.

Thanks to the inspiration and efforts of Marilyn Winslett Donoho and Judy Lien Duda, an affiliation was arranged with the "Wreaths Across America" organization that brought in the Montevallo Historical Society as sponsor for this local component of what has become an annual event at military and civilian cemeteries nationwide.

My father, Clayton O. Nordan (born in 1914) was a Captain in the U.S. Army and served in the European Theatre in World War II. He commanded "B" Battery of the 277th Field Artillery battalion,



Capt. Clayton O. Nordan

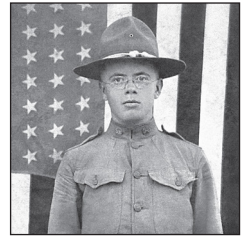
which was a part of General George Patton's 3rd Army that charged across France, Belgium, and Luxembourg following the D-Day Invasion in June of 1944. They fought in the "Battle of the Bulge" and ultimately crossed the Rhine River in Germany in the spring of 1945 which soon led to the surrender of the retreating Nazi army and the end of the war.

Capt. Nordan's battery consisted of two 240 mm Howitzer cannons (the largest in the U.S. arsenal) which they moved across Europe using heavy trucks and set them in numerous firing positions throughout the campaign. His claim to fame during the "Bulge" was firing the first artillery shell in the famous "Relief of Bastogne", the Belgian city where U.S. forces were encircled and pinned down by German forces before Patton rescued them.

My grandfather, W.M. "Mack" Wyatt (born in 1892) was a corporal in the U.S. Army in World War I. He was conscripted in August of 1918 and reported to basic training in Augusta, GA that same month. He spent his entire enlistment stateside and was released and honorably discharged that December when the war ended. He came to Montevallo from Clanton in 1935 when he bought the Montevallo Times. He also served as Montevallo mayor

or from 1948 until his death in 1966.

My uncle, 1st Lt. James Alexander "Jimmie" Wyatt (born in 1922), was a fighter pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II. He flew P-47 fighters out of England usually in escort of bomber groups on missions to destroy targets both in Germany and German occupied territory. In a dogfight in the Hamburg, Germany area, he was shot up by a Luftwaffe fighter but was able to keep his ship airborne and limp back at low altitude to his base across the English Channel. Lt. Wyatt was awarded the Purple Heart and went to his grave with machine gun bullet splinters in his leg.



Corporal "Mack" Wyatt

William Patrick "Pat" Wyatt (born 1928) entered the U.S. Navy in June of 1946, immediately following graduation (along with eight other classmates) from Montevallo High School in May. He served in the Navy Signal Corps and was discharged in April of 1948, having earned the rank of Seaman 2nd Class.



1st Lt. Jimmie Wyatt

I have no doubt that similar stories of valor and courage along with impressive accomplishments during their military service could be told about many of the 100+ veterans that we know are buried in the Montevallo City Cemetery. If you are at all inspired by these accounts of the military careers of my family members and you want to honor other vets buried at Montevallo Cemetery, then please visit [www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org) and sponsor a wreath today.



Seaman Pat Wyatt



To reserve a wreath to honor a family member at Christmas-time or to help us reach our overall goal of 100 wreaths, go to [www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org). A single click there will take you to the Wreaths Across America

website where you can use a credit card to make your purchase (\$15 each). On the WAA wreath order page you can also volunteer to help place wreaths on Montevallo City Cemetery veterans' graves on December 17, 2022, the day set aside for the laying of wreaths nationally.

**The Official Cut-off Date for Wreath Orders is Monday, November 28, 2022**

# Montevallo

## Historical Society

*Opening the Portals of Our Heritage*



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Montevallo, AL 35115

[www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org)