



Lawrence Galloway points out some information about a photograph of the crew of the USS Arizona.

## **A salute to military history: Museum at Mountain Home to hold open houses**

By Rex Barber  
Press Staff Writer  
[rbarber@johnsoncitypress.com](mailto:rbarber@johnsoncitypress.com)

Lawrence Galloway was serving in the Navy aboard the aircraft carrier USS Tarawa in the middle 1940s when he photographed a pilot crashing his plane into the ocean.

Galloway captured on film the plane's approach and touchdown on the carrier, and then its flipping. Other photographers aboard the carrier that particular day shot pictures of the plane tumbling into the ocean and the pilot, seemingly unharmed, floating beside his doomed craft that was slowly sinking beneath the waves.

"It was hard to land on an aircraft carrier," Galloway said during a tour of the museum Thursday.

This series of photos is laid out for anyone to see in the Museum At Mountain Home on the Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus. The museum is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 11 a.m. and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Beginning this weekend the museum will hold a series of open houses on Saturdays through Nov. 6 from 1 to 4 p.m. The museum is located in Building 34, also known as the clock tower.

The medical and military museum is a collaborative project of the VA, East Tennessee State University, the Quillen College of Medicine and the city of Johnson City.

The museum collections reflect the history of health care in South Central Appalachia with exhibits of late 19th and early 20th century medical, pharmaceutical and nursing artifacts. Additional displays reflect life at the VA and military history.

It is the military history in the building that is relatively new, and Galloway has volunteered his time and energy to build the exhibits on display.

One of the most prominent military exhibits is one for the USS Arizona, the battleship sunk at Pearl Harbor by Japanese fighters. This surprise attack pushed America into World War II.

The display of the Arizona includes a large panoramic shot of the entire crew of the ship. The picture probably dates to around 1920 or so, Galloway said. He based that estimate on the style of hats some of the sailors wore in the photograph.

A family from Elizabethton donated the picture.

"I think to me that is the most impressive thing we've got here," Galloway said. "And the fact that we were able to get that photograph ... that's really something."

Other military-themed displays include at World War I-era Army uniform and mess kit, pictures and the story of the Japanese surrender in World War II aboard the USS Missouri and information and displays about the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War.

Interesting information about the VA itself is contained in the museum.

The VA in Johnson City was established in 1903 specifically for American soldiers who were disabled and could not work. Many veterans lived there up until the late 1970s.

According to one exhibit in the museum, Mountain Home had strict regulations for veterans to follow. Offenders answered their charges in a VA court system housed on campus. A log book in the exhibit shows some common offenses and punishments.

Galloway said the museum is an educational experience for anyone who stops in, and veterans are appreciative of the effort.

"I've had a lot of them come in here and they were very impressed with what we have on display," Galloway said.

The special open houses scheduled for the next six Saturdays will lead up to the observance of Veterans Day on Nov. 11 when the final open house will be held between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

For more information on the museum or to inquire about donating items for display, call Martha Whaley at 439-8096 or e-mail [Whaleym@etsu.edu](mailto:Whaleym@etsu.edu).

Visit the museum website at [www.etsu.edu/com/museum](http://www.etsu.edu/com/museum).