

Beloved Dairy Farmer honored for Navy Service

By Sherri Onorati, Special to The Leader

Korean War era veteran and Brighton resident Joseph Leno Malone was honored last night as the May 2019 Veteran of the Month at the Tipton County Museum by family, friends, fellow veterans and members of the community.

Kathy Desjarlais, president of the Tipton County Veterans Council read Malone's bio and award certificate to a crowded room, all gathered to honor the U. S. Navy veteran.

The Tipton County Museum, Veterans Memorial and Nature Center in partnership with the Tipton County Veterans Council, presented Malone with a certificate honoring his service to his country, along with an American flag flown over the state capitol. Girl Scout Troop 13804 provided refreshments.

Several leaders of Tipton County's veterans' organizations thanked Malone for his service and for paving the way for their service.

Grandson Ryan Malone spoke up about the wonderful childhood he has had because of his grandfather and the love he has for him.

"It was nothing but fun," said Ryan. "He gave us all kinds of stories and took care of us. There were always wild and crazy things going on. It was amazing and I am so proud of him, beyond proud of him."

The son of Gordon Malone and Ann Dickey Malone, he was born in the Mt. Carmel community on July 27, 1933 and raised along with his younger brother on his father's dairy farm.

Although, Malone was still in high school when the Korean War began, he felt the pull to serve his country and joined the U. S. Navy Reserves in 1950, serving in the reserves until he switched to active duty status in January 1953. He was stationed onboard the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43), homeported in Mayport, Fla., as a member of the aviation department where he learned to take care of the attack carrier's aircraft. Because the Korean War was winding down, he and his shipmates participated in carrier operations helping to train Navy pilots. During the summer of 1953, he left on his first six-month Mediterranean (Med) cruise, visiting various countries including Spain, Italy and Cuba. He deployed on a second Med cruise the following summer, this time, participating in NATO exercises and visiting Turkey and Israel.

While aboard the Coral Sea, Malone served as a plane captain with Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA 11), responsible for aircraft maintenance and preflight inspections. As a member of the "Red Rippers," Malone often flew with the squadron's pilots and remembers vividly one incident when the engine of the aircraft he was traveling in failed because of a vapor lock while flying over Lake Pontchartrain, La. He and the pilot frantically worked together to correct the problem and were very thankful their efforts worked and they were able to land their aircraft safely.

"I have never gotten in trouble," Malone proudly told those in attendance at last evening's event, recounting he had never been disciplined for poor behavior or performance. "I always followed the rules and regulations of the Navy."

Malone was honorably discharged as a Navy Airman on Jan. 13, 1956 and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal for this service to the United States.

After his stint in the Navy was finished, he returned to Tipton County and the family farm, where he soon met his future bride, Miss Betty Jane Gatlin, a newly trained Tipton County educator. On April 16, 1957, Rev. Ronnie Wylie united 23-year-old Joseph L. Malone in marriage with the 20-year old love of his life. A new home, built on the family farm, and children, son Brett and daughter Melanie, soon followed. The family now includes daughter-in-law Missy Malone and grandchildren Mason, Ryan, Breanna and Kaden. Son Brett Malone passed away last Thanksgiving Day from cancer.

Joe and Betty are members of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Covington where he has served as Deacon for more than 60 years.

The Veteran of the Month program honors a Tipton County veteran on the second Tuesday of each month at the Tipton County Museum at 6:30p.m., and the public is invited to attend. Nominees must be an honorable discharged or current veteran and a resident of Tipton County. Nomination forms are available at the Museum.