

Lyle Dupra  
Navy Armed Guard Veteran of World War II  
Navy Veteran of World War II and Korea

Mr. Lyle Dupra of Fairport, N.Y. is a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy Armed Guard, sailors who were assigned to act as gunners and organize the defense of armed transports.

Unfortunately, during the war, there was always a shortage of military ships to act as escorts for merchant vessels, and sometimes, Armed Guardsmen and a limited number of machine guns were all that stood between the safety of the men and important war materials aboard and German U-boats and other threats to Allied shipping.

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations acknowledged how crucial the service of the Armed Guard was in keeping Allied forces supplied, writing, "it can be safely asserted that without naval defense of merchant ships the merchant marine would have been lost and the war would have been lost."

During his time in the Armed Guard, Mr. Dupra sailed on the Liberty ship S.S. John Alden, which was crewed by members of the Merchant Marine. The ship was attacked by Japanese fighters in October 1944 while landing troops, during which Dupra was struck by shrapnel and partially lost his hearing. Dupra received a belated Purple Heart for these injuries in 2002.

Towards the end of the war, the Armed Guard was dissolved and Mr. Dupra moved to the regular Navy, where he participated in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, by most measures the largest naval battle in all of recorded history.

Mr. Dupra also served aboard the minesweeper U.S.S. Device during the Korean War.

Mr. Dupra's service to his country did not end when the war did. For decades after the war, he sought to increase public awareness of the dangerous work he and his brothers-in-arms had done in the Armed Guard. He has spent years writing articles and speaking in public about his experiences, and also wrote and published a book, "We Delivered! The U.S. Navy Armed Guard in World War II."

For both his individual service in two of the definitive conflicts of the 20th century and for his hard work as a civilian making sure that the sacrifices of the U.S. Armed Guard were not forgotten, Mr. Dupra deserves our gratitude and respect.

In the author's note accompanying his book, Dupra wrote, "I am sure that few even today are familiar with the Armed Guard or know what brave function they filled, along with the Merchant Marine, during the Second World War." It is hoped that adding Mr. Dupra to the Veterans' Hall of Fame is another step towards making sure that the story of these forgotten heroes of the Greatest Generation are brought back into popular recognition.