



JEFFREY SMITH/Leader photo

Standing behind Jim Hutto during his birthday party at the Jacksonville Care Center on Wednesday are members of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Ira Eaker Chapter (from left), Dub Toombs, Bob Davis, Gary George and Jim Daugherty.

PACIFIC CAMPAIGN

99-year-old vet World War II

■ **Friends and family attend his birthday party at care facility, recalling his wartime exploits.**

By JEFFREY SMITH

Leader staff writer

Second World War veteran James "Jim" Hutto celebrated his 99th birthday on Wednesday at Jacksonville Care Center, where he lives.

The center had cake, snacks and balloons with residents sing-

ing "Happy Birthday" played by Jacksonville guitarist Ken Murphy.

Military veterans also stopped by to congratulate Hutto on his birthday.

Hutto was born March 6, 1920, in Brunswick, Ga. He is the lone survivor of five brothers and a sister. Hutto has three children—daughter Cheryl Hutto of North Little Rock, who attended the party, and daughter Barbara Boner of Benton and son Carl Gene of Springdale.

Hutto was 14 years old when his

mother died while giving birth. His father sent the children to an orphanage. In 1937, when Hutto was 17, he left the farm where he was working and joined the Army.

Hutto was in the infantry and fought against the Japanese in the South Pacific during the war.

"I was at Guadalcanal, the Solomon Islands, Bougainville (New Guinea/Solomon Islands) and the Philippines.

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The Japanese liked to fight at night," Hutto said.

"It was a hard battle at Bougainville. The Solomon Islands were full of coconut plantations owned by the Lever Brothers to make soaps. I liked the Philippines. It was the most beautiful island and the people were nice too," Hutto said.

During the war, two articles about Hutto were published in newspapers.

One story was about Hutto sending his sister, Betty, a rifle he took from a Japanese soldier he killed during hand-to-hand combat in Guadalcanal. The rifle was sent through the mail and took two months to arrive at her home in Georgia.

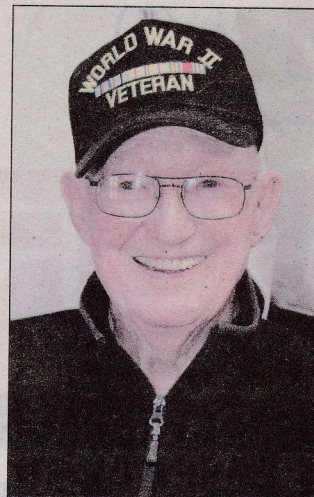
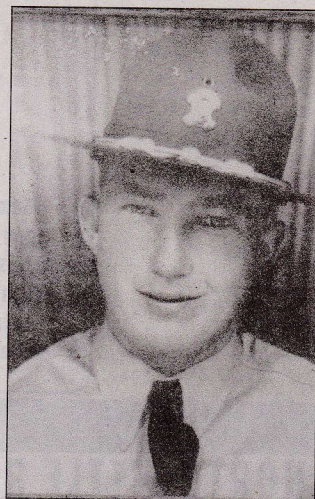
According to the article, it was an established rule that a soldier who took a weapon in personal combat was permitted to keep it as a souvenir.

When Hutto returned to the United States, he learned his sister had sold the gun.

Another news clipping reported Hutto was a first sergeant of a divisional headquarters company on Cebu Island in the Philippines. He managed company affairs during the day and manned one of the foxhole defensive positions at night.

The article said in the course of four nights, men on the perimeter killed five Japanese soldiers, captured one and wounded two others.

Hutto was quoted as saying, "Those Japs are tricky but not clever. Although we had several uncomfortable eve-



JEFFREY SMITH/Leader photos

Above left, James Hutto served in the Army for 21 years from 1937 to 1958 and said he enjoyed it. Hutto, a Second World War veteran, celebrated his 99th birthday in Jacksonville on Wednesday. Above, Hutto fought against the Japanese at Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands in 1942 during the Second World War. Left, Hutto has a shadow box that displays the medals he received during his 21-year career in the military. He was awarded two Bronze Stars.



nings, it was a change from routine duty and one of those situations you have to expect during war."

Hutto told The Leader that the Japanese were trying to get in and were loaded with grenades.

Hutto was awarded two Bronze Stars for his service. After the war, Hutto remained in the Army and was in supply.

He came to Arkansas when he was stationed at Camp Robinson, where he met his wife. Hutto retired from the military after a 21-year career, ranked as chief warrant officer.

"The Army treated me well. I wished I had stayed in longer," he said.

Afterward he worked at Camp Robinson and 10 years at Levi Strauss.

Hutto shared some secrets to living a long life.

"I take care of myself the best I can. I always try to do the right thing. I try to eat

good. If you drink, don't abuse it. I'll have a beer now and then. I take the medication that is prescribed. The VA does a good job taking care of me. I think I'll make it to 100," Hutto said.

Hutto loves John Wayne movies. His favorite football team is the Dallas Cowboys.