



School Board Awards Special Diploma
By: Jane Graham, Staff Writer, The Southwest Times
February 19, 2003

PULASKI – A call to server his country kept Hasvil Douglas Crowder from getting his high school diploma. Tuesday the Virginia Board of Education and the Pulaski County School Board saw that he finally got the diploma.

Crowder quit school September 1951 to enlist in the U.S. Navy, he said in an interview this morning. He went to boot camp in Great Lakes, Ill. and went aboard battleship New Jersey in December 1951.

Crowder was aboard the New Jersey when it arrived in Korea in late Feb. 1953. The battleship and its crew were there when combat ended in Korea in July 1953, Crowder said. They remained there until Oct. 1953 when they came home.

“Tonight we honor Mr. Hasvil Douglas Crowder a Korean War veteran by awarding him the Commonwealth of Virginia Korean War Veteran Honorary High School Diploma issued by the Virginia Board of Education in grateful recognition of the personal sacrifices made to ensure the safety and security of our country and all mankind; and in acknowledgement of a lifetime of learning an achievement that has enriched our community and our country,” Dr. Donald E. Stowers said.

The presentation was made possible by an action of the 2002 General Assembly, according to Stowers.

“Senate Bill 365 recognizes the educational, personal, and financial sacrifices made by Korean War veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces,” Stowers explained in presenting Crowder to the board. “The General Assembly found that some of these veterans left school before completing the requirements for their high school diploma. Many of them were unable to complete their high school education for various reasons upon returning home. Because the General Assembly found that these veterans have made ‘significant contributions’ to their country ‘while gaining substantial knowledge and skills through work,’ Senate Bill

365 provides for the honorary high school diploma to be issued by the Virginia Board of Education to qualified veterans.”

The Korean War did not end Crowder’s service in the Navy. He re-enlisted in October 1995 and was in the crew of the U.S.S. Forrestal, the nation’s first super aircraft carrier when it was commissioned.

Crowder said he remained on the Forrestal until the fall of 1957 when he went to shore duty at the submarine base in New London, Conn. He left there in 1990 for the U.S.S. Freemont, an amphibious ship.

Crowder’s Navy career was plagued by a service related back injury that required several surgeries. He finally had to leave the service because of the injury.

He retired in Sept. 1967, a year he remembers for that reason and the loss of his brother in Vietnam. He said his brother, H.H. “Johnny” Crowder was killed in Vietnam in December, 1967.

“I love my Navy and I wanted to stay, but I couldn’t,” Crowder said.

He noted he took about 20 correspondence courses relating to the military and attended New River Community College for three years.

When his wife, Susie, a para-educator at Critzer Elementary School, read a newspaper article about the state’s high school diplomas for Korean veterans, he decided to ask Stowers about it.

Stowers asked the Crowders to supply him with the background information and was able to get the diploma that was presented Tuesday.

“It surprised me,” Crowder admitted.