

## A Salute to John Funderburg WWII, Korean Conflict and Beyond

*Presented by  
Pearson Wood, Member  
American Legion Post 67  
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John Broadus Funderburg was born December 16, 1921 at Wilmington, North Carolina. He, and two brothers and two sisters, were raised there. John began collecting and mounting specimens of the abundant wildlife of the southeastern part of the state while still in elementary school and by the time he graduated from New Hanover High School in 1939 he had sent numerous specimens of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals to the State Museum and had published a number of papers on these animals.

After completing his freshman year at the University of North Carolina, he entered the U.S. Army in October, 1941. He was discharged in May, 1946, after serving over two years in the European Theatre of Operations. He owned and operated a taxidermy studio from 1946 until December 1949 when he enrolled at East Carolina Teacher's College in Greenville. In May, 1950, he was recalled for two years active duty with his National Guard Unit, the 150<sup>th</sup> AAA Gun Battalion, during the Korean Conflict.

Master Sergeant Funderburg was a winner of the coveted title Expert Artilleryman. Before taking the test for Expert, the candidate had to pass oral exams for Second Class and First Class Artilleryman. He also had to be endorsed by Battery and Battalion Commanders. The title of Expert Artilleryman carries with it the privilege of wearing a special badge on the left side of the uniform.

John was the recipient of many commendations during his service, as you can see from the attached picture. He also recently received a Freedom Team Salute—Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service to the Nation as a United States Soldier signed by the Chief of Staff, United States Army and by the Secretary of the Army.

In 1952, shortly after his discharge from active duty, he re-entered East Carolina Teachers College. He graduated with a B.S. in Science in 1955 and immediately enrolled at N.C. State College where he received his M.S. degree in Wildlife Management and Conservation in 1957 and his Ph. D. in Animal Ecology in 1960. During his five years as a graduate student, he was curator for the bird and mammal collections at N.C. State. From 1960 until 1974, he taught a wide variety of biology and zoology courses at Duke University, Florida Southern College and Randolph-Macon College, where he was Chairman of the Biology Department at the time he became director of the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences. Several other accomplishments followed through the years.

On July 1, 1974, Dr. John B. Funderburg became the fourth director of the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences. Founded in 1879 the museum is a division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Commissioner James A. Graham's charge to Funderburg when he was appointed

was simple and direct, “Get the museum accredited and make it the best damn museum in the state!” In 1979, exactly five years later, the first of these charges was met. The North Carolina State Museum was granted full accreditation by the American Association of Museums accompanied by the statement the “The museum’s growth and development in the past five years has been outstanding and planning for the future is being done carefully and methodically.” Many other accomplishments followed under Dr. Funderburg’s direction.

Retirement came in June, 1988.

John was married in 1952 to Margaret Keene, from Montreal, Canada, whom he met when recalled to active duty during the Korean Conflict. Margaret was secretary to the Head of Undergraduate Instruction in the NC State School of Engineering and their three daughters, Christina, Susan and Mary were all students and graduates of State. One daughter died ten years ago, his wife died one month ago.

His hobbies are hunting, fishing, taxidermy, decoy collecting and decoy carving.

John said, “I am 87 years old, was married for 55 years, and have lived a full life !”

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Dr. John Funderburg, The American Legion Post 67, Cary, North Carolina, salutes you for your service to God and country!



Dr. John Funderburg



Pearson Wood