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# Better late than never

Yakima man  
awarded medal  
after 46 years

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After eating cold oatmeal off the ground on New Georgia Island in the Pacific in 1943, the breakfast that World War II Infantryman Harlow P. Adams enjoyed at the Yakima Firing Center mess hall March 31 must have tasted like nectar and ambrosia.

Adams was in the mess hall to receive, belatedly, the Bronze Star medal he earned in combat in the Guadalcanal-New Georgia campaign against Japanese troops 46 years ago. Lt. Col. Dale Hill, firing center commander, made the presentation before a roomful of troops awaiting breakfast.

"Sometimes it takes a long time for an authorized medal to catch up with a soldier," Hill said. He advised younger men and women soldiers present to make sure their service records are always kept up to date.

Adams and two World War II companions sat down with the troops to a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon and blueberry pancakes. He recalled a humbler breakfast he had on New Georgia after being cut off from his 25th Division company.

"Here I hadn't eaten a bite for three days and the cooks informed me they'd just dumped the last of the oatmeal."

Adams said he scooped the cold oatmeal off the ground with his hands and ate it. "Starved as I was, it tasted wonderful," he recalled.

After the war, Adams was in the service station business 29 years, including 17 years as a Chevron dealer at 616 E. Yakima Avenue.

After retiring five years ago, Adams joined Lela Erickson Linker's old-time musical group which entertains at nursing homes and senior citizen dances. He said he mainly plays the guitar, but also fiddles a little.



(Photo by Charles Lamb)

Forty-six years after the Guadalcanal-New Georgia campaign in World War II, Harlow P. Adams receives the Bronze Star Medal from Lt. Col. Dale Hill, Yakima Firing Center commander.

With Adams was Jim "Old Warrior" Swearngin, Yakima, who recently was awarded his World War II Bronze Star by Col. Hill. Swearngin's medal showed on his discharge, but he hadn't received it.

Swearngin showed Adams where to write to get the combat medal. He said a postwar regulation also authorizes the Bronze Star to servicemen with the Combat Infantry Badge or Air Medal on their records.