

ETBU alum receives WWII service medals

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MARSHALL—A 91-year-old [East Texas Baptist University](#) alumnus finally received medals he earned 70 years ago in the South Pacific during World War II.

Joe Hogue of Overton received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal during a ceremony in Lampsato Chapel in the Ornelas Student Center at ETBU.



Capt. Gil Miller, commanding officer of the Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, pins the Distinguished Flying Cross medal on World War II veteran and

East Texas Baptist University alumnus Joe Hogue of Overton. (PHOTO/ETBU/Mike Midkiff) Hogue, a retired educator and member of the ETBU Athletics Hall of Fame, earned the medals for his service from Nov. 15, 1943, to May 4, 1944, as part of the Navy Bombing Squadron VB 108.

“We were out there longer than that, but this is the period of time the Navy figured,” said Hogue, dressed in Navy blues for the presentation.

Three others members of VB 108 still are alive and recently received their medals. Air logbooks kept by a pilot with whom Hogue served were instrumental in determining the veterans earned their medals.

“It is an honor of indescribable level and very humbling to have this opportunity to present these awards,” said Capt. Gil Miller, commanding officer of the U.S. Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base. Miller praised the “unimaginable sacrifices” of Hogue and other World War II veterans.

“I was a tail gunner on what the Army called the B-24 Liberator, but in the Navy it was called a PB4Y-1, because they had some modifications on it different then the Army,” Hogue recalled.

After the war, Hogue worked in Houston before enrolling at East Texas Baptist College, where he graduated in 1956.



A sailor salutes World War II veteran Joe Hogue of Overton after presenting the United Stags flag to him. The U.S. Navy finally awarded Hogue, an East Texas Baptist University alumnus, the medals he earned 70 years ago over the South Pacific. Hogue, 91, received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal during a special ceremony conducted by the U.S. Navy in Lampsato Chapel in the Ornelas Student Center at ETBU. (PHOTO/ ETBU/Mike Midkiff) Hogue still does not know the reason for the 70-year delay in receiving his medals.

“They did not tell me why it took so long,” he said. “A Navy captain told me over the phone recently, ‘Mr. Hogue, the only thing we regret about this is the fact it took over 70 years to get the medals to you.’”

Hogue originally was scheduled to receive his medals Dec. 7 at the Naval Air Station in Fort Worth, but an ice storm postponed the ceremony. At the suggestion of Paul Tapp, ETBU director of alumni development, Hogue

asked if the ceremony could be held on the campus of his alma mater.

“I appreciate the university allowing this to occur on campus,” Hogue said. “I have realized that so many who were in my squadron that have died, who probably deserve this more than I do. I just regret that it has been so long coming that they were passed over. It really was an overwhelming experience for me to have all these service men and others to come and be a part of this presentation.”