



## William Lewis Dawson

April 18, 1925 - May 13, 2019

William L. Dawson, U.S. Navy veteran WWII and retired Firefighter of Washington D.C. Fire Department passed away peacefully at his home in Waldorf, Maryland on May 13, 2019. He was 94 years old.

William L. Dawson was born April 18, 1925 in Washington, D.C. Bill attended Chamberlin H.S. in S.E. and worked at the Washington Navy Yard as a young teenager. It was at the Washington Navy Yard, December 7, 1941 at the young age of 17, where Bill made the decision to join the war effort of WWII. Bill completed his basic training in 1943 in Bainbridge, Maryland. After an unsuccessful attempt to enlist in submarine duty, Bill snuck into a line of applicants who were volunteering for a yet unnamed outfit that involved, "explosives and distant, hazardous duty". Bill was among 42 Navy men chosen and assigned to Ft. Pierce, Florida that made up a small amphibious unit called The Naval Combat Demolition Unit, later referred to as Frogmen. These men formed the first class of NCDU and underwent intense training at Ft. Pierce, Florida. The training came to a pinnacle during a week the men described as "A week of Hell". This term stuck and still today Hell Week remains the final component to BUD's training for U.S. Navy SEAL's. Bill Dawson and his fellow Frogmen were tasked with clearing the beaches for General MacArthur's island-hopping campaign northward through the western Pacific towards his return to the Philippines. From 1943 to 1945 Bill and his small team of Frogmen, NCDU #2 & #3 led by LT. (jg) Kain, made 12

invasions in the Pacific theater, from New Guinea, through the Philippines to Borneo.

These early amphibious warriors have evolved into and paved the way for nine Navy SEAL teams. Up until his death, Bill was the last surviving member of Class #001 NCDU Frogmen.

After his discharge from the Navy, Bill longed for a job that resembled the excitement and brotherhood of his Navy days. He found this career with the D.C. Fire Department. Bill served with the D.C.F.D. Engine 8, from 1949 until his retirement in 1971. Bill married his wife Eva Hoffman in 1964 and became an instant father to five stepchildren. They resided in Mt. Carmel, Maryland where they remained a couple for nearly 50 years. In 2015, with the help of Commander Tom Hawkins, USN. Ret., and good friend Lisa Merriam, Bill authored a book entitled, "Before They Were SEALs, They Were Frogs". Through the course of several decades, Bill faithfully attended annual SEAL musters and reunions at Ft. Pierce, FL and Virginia Beach, VA, along with monthly D.C.F.D. retirement luncheons.

His wife Eva who passed away in 2013 and 1 stepdaughter Barbara who passed in 2010 preceded Bill in death. Also preceded in death are his father William A. Dawson, mother Elizabeth Howard Dawson, and sister Ruth.

Four remaining stepchildren, grandchildren and great grandchildren survive Bill along with several nieces and nephews.

Bill led a life of service in both wartime and peacetime. His small team of "Naked Warriors" paved the way for future Frogmen and they left a wake of history and legacy at the stern. Bill enjoyed God's beauty in everything, and he enjoyed all that life had to offer. He struggled with life issues but at the end of the day, he found his peace with God. It is only fitting to close his obituary with the final words penned from his book.

“I am blessed to have had the opportunity to stand next to the greatest of men and to call them friends and brothers. Though my time with the Navy was short, it cast a long, bright glow over my whole life. The Navy SEAL Ethos talks about being “forged by adversity”. I know we had plenty of that. Yet, adversity is not what endures in my heart. For me, what endures is the legacy of my teammates, the character and honor of good men whom I came to know well and to trust to the ends of the earth. They have steadied me in the worst moments, and our life long bond will sustain me to my final day”.

William “Bill” Dawson. ...Rest in peace Frogman...

A visitation will be held on Wednesday, May 29, 2019 from 10AM until time of service at 11AM at Raymond Funeral Service, P.A., 5635 Washington Avenue, La Plata, Maryland 20646.

Interment at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY **29**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Raymond Funeral Service  
5635 Washington Avenue  
La Plata, MD 20646  
(301) 934-2920  
business.office@raymondfuneral.com  
<https://www.raymondfuneralservice.com>

## Service

MAY **29**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Raymond Funeral Service  
5635 Washington Avenue  
La Plata, MD 20646  
(301) 934-2920  
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<https://www.raymondfuneralservice.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *William Lewis Dawson*

October 08, 2023 at 10:45 PM



“ *William Lewis Dawson*

October 04, 2023 at 03:12 PM



“ *BZ Bill!!!*

**Shawn Winter** - May 28, 2019 at 01:11 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of William Lewis Dawson.*



May 28, 2019 at 08:52 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of William Lewis Dawson.*



May 26, 2019 at 07:46 AM

BW

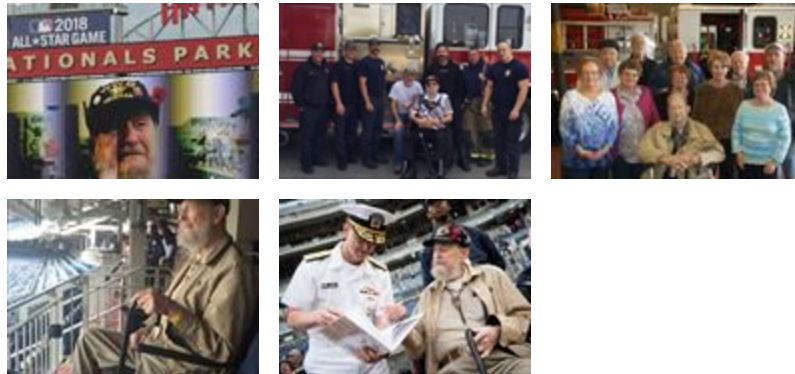
“ I enjoyed all the talks we had, the stories he told me, and his watchful eye over me when ever we were at the lodge or when I would take him to the DC Chapter get togethers....he will truly be missed.



Beverly ware - May 24, 2019 at 06:11 PM

GT

“ 18 files added to the album Memories Album



GREGORY TURNELL - May 23, 2019 at 04:22 PM

RS

“ 7 files added to the album Memories Album



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Raymond Funeral Service - May 22, 2019 at 03:06 PM