



**Howard
Nelson**
Navy

Howard Nelson

Feb 13, 1926 - Mar 22, 2015

BIRTHPLACE: Ordentown, NJ

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Gunner's Mate

DIVISION: Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Jul 14, 1943 - May 3, 1946

**HONORED BY: His Children: Barbara, John, Linda
& Dan**

BIOGRAPHY

Serving as a gunner's mate on a Mine Sweeper during WWII was never boring! I remember a time when we were engaged in combat and we saw a Japanese fighter shoot down a P38 Lightning. The P38 was down in the reef off an island and we moved in to rescue him. We had seen his plane get hit by enemy fire and saw his engine burst into flames. The pilot turned the P38 upside down and bailed out. We were all worried because we didn't see his parachute open for what seemed like a very long time. Finally, we saw that chute open, and he later told us he had waited to open his chute to avoid being shot! Once we had the pilot on board we assessed that he had a minor leg injury but was otherwise ok. The pilot's wing man had been a P51 Mustang from the Australian Air Force. He flew over us with his canopy open and we held up the parachute to show him that we had successfully rescued the pilot. The P51 pilot gave us a thumbs up and took off.