BENTONVILLE, Ark. (October 29, 2012) – Frank Manasseri, who served on board the USS Charles H. Roan during the Cuban missile crisis, will receive three service medals during a Nov. 1 ceremony at NorthWest Arkansas Community College.

Lt. Col. Steve Gray (Ret.), military liaison for U.S. Sen. John Boozman, R-Arkansas, will present to Manasseri the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal – Cuba, and the Navy Expeditionary Medal – Cuba during the ceremony. The event will begin at 9 a.m. in the Walmart Auditorium of the Shewmaker Center for Workforce Technologies in Bentonville. Manasseri did not receive the medals at the time of his service.

Manasseri is a former NWACC student and a member of NWACC Alumni Association. He joined the Navy on Oct. 27, 1960, and served until Oct. 16, 1964. He was a radioman, trained in such skills as Morse code, teletype operations and maintenance and the general movement of information, orders and instructions over broadband methods.

During his service, Manasseri became a participant in what historians have called the greatest threat of nuclear war during the Cold War period. In mid-October 1962 photographs taken from a U-2 aircraft showed nuclear missile sites being built by the Soviet Union on the island of Cuba. President John F. Kennedy decided to place a naval blockade around Cuba to prevent the Soviet Union from
bringing in more military supplies. Kennedy also demanded the removal of the missiles already there.

Manasseri’s ship, the USS Charles H. Roan, a Gearing Class Destroyer, was one of the ships engaged in the “quarantine,” and was there to block the transporting of any further intercontinental ballistic missiles from the Soviet Union into the island nation. The confrontation ended Oct. 28, 1962, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev publicly announced that he had agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba.

The USS Charles H. Roan, with its home port in Newport, R.I., remained in the region until Nov. 24, 1962, according to the Department of the Navy’s Naval History & Heritage Command website.

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