

USS BRISTOL DD 857 VETERANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER Fall 2017

Don't forget to check out You Tube for videos and photos of our shipmates Honor Flight [honorees at https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=uss+bristol+dd+857](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=uss+bristol+dd+857). You may also enjoy photos submitted by our shipmates on our website by clicking History, then, Photo Albums

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FALL NEWSLETTER, SEPT. 2017

Shipmates:

Summer has ended and say hello to Fall; we all know what comes next.

Our 19th Reunion held in Williamsburg, Virginia at The Great Wolf Lodge, went on as planned. Due to two major Hurricanes and illness of several members, the attendance was lower than usual with last minute cancellations. All our tours, including the dinner cruise, went off without a hitch. The waters were a little choppy as we passed all the new ships the Navy had in the Norfolk Navy Yard. The new destroyers are a little larger than the "Bristol" was. All things considered, it was a very enjoyable reunion with beautiful weather and friends sharing fellowship and memories.

At our annual organizational meeting held on Thursday, Sept. 14th, the following items were discussed and acted upon.

1. By Law Change: My letter of June 20th, 2017, sent to all the members, discussed a change to the By Laws to clarify the issue of eventual dissolution of the association. The change

was unanimously approved and passed. The members who were present asked the Board to send a thank you to our shipmate and plankowner, Wally Dann, who was instrumental in making this change happen. This letter has since been sent by our Treasurer, Tony Molnar, on behalf of the Board and membership.

2. Dues: Our Association's fiscal year runs from Oct. 1st to Sept. 30th. The 2018 dues are still only \$15.00. Please send in your dues, along with any outstanding dues, to our Treasurer, Tony Molnar. Let's all work together in keeping our association strong. The checks are made payable to the USS Bristol DD857 Veterans Association.
3. Tin Can Sailors: Marty Walsh, our Association Secretary, attended the Tin Can Sailor 2017 reunion and came back with an in depth report as to what he experienced. It was informative, interesting and worth thinking about for the future. Nothing has been decided at this time.

- 4. Election of Officers: With no nominations from the floor, a motion was made to re-elect all the present officers to their current positions and they agreed to stay on for another

year. The Officers are:
 President – Paul Ratcliffe;
 First Vice President – Paul Kallfelz; Second Vice President – Duane Haugan;
 Treasurer – Tony Molnar;
 Secretary – Marty Walsh.
 The appointments are Don Tanner – Master at Arms;
 Ed Lynch – News Letter Editor and Walter Marczak – Chaplain

- 5. 2018 Reunion: The membership voted to continue using the Reunion Brat as our 2018 reunion coordinator. It was also agreed to continue the five day format. The 20th reunion will be held in Savannah, Georgia. The date and hotel will be decided at a later date and information will be released after they are finalized. I am confident that it will be a great reunion.

PLEASE CHECK OUT THE BRISTOL WEBSITE FOR ARTICLES, HISTORY, UPDATED INFORMATION AND REUNION INFORMATION.

We are a great organization formed for Navy veterans of the USS Bristol, to get together and share memories and enjoy the fellowship of shipmates from long ago. We have a 20 year history so please support The USS Bristol Association and keep it going. I am

proud to be part of it as are all the other members of the Board and appointed members.

Have a safe and healthy year and I hope to see you in Savannah.

Paul Ratcliffe, President EM2

The Forgotten War by Hazel Simeon, MAL , from the Voice of the Enlisted

The Korean War: Let us remember and honor the sacrifice of our military who served in that short but bloody war.

The Korean War, also know as “The Forgotten War” was fought from 25 June 1950, to 27 July 1953. It began when North Korea invaded South Korea, supported by China and the Soviet Union. On that day the United Nations Security Council adopted S/RES/83: Complaint of aggression upon the Republic of Korea and decided the formation and dispatch of the UN forces in Korea. Twenty-one countries of the UN eventually contributed to the UN force, with the United States providing 88% of the UN’s military personnel.

According to the data from the U.S. Department of Defense, the United States suffered 33,686 battle deaths, along with 2,830 non-battle deaths, during their first engagement with the Chinese on 1 November 1950. South Korea reported som 373,599 civilian and 137,899 military deaths. Western sources estimate the PVA ((Chinese) People ’s Volunteer Army) suffered 400,00 killed and 486,000 wounded, while the KPA (Korean People’s Army) suffered 215,000 killed and 303,000 wounded. Recent scholarship has put the full battle death toll on all sides at just over 1.2 million.

The first major U.S. strategic bombing campaign against North Korea, began in late July 1950. On

12 August 1950, the U.S. Air Force dropped 625 tons of bombs on North Korea; two weeks later, the daily tonnage increased to some 800 tons. Overall, the U.S. dropped 635,000 tons of bombs-including 32,557 tons of napalm-on Korea, more than they did during the whole Pacific campaign of WWII.

The Korean War was the first war which jet aircraft played the central role in air combat. This was also the first time that helicopters played a significant role in combat. Because neither Korea had a significant navy, the Korean War featured few naval battles. The Korean War saw limited use of the tank and featured no large-scale tank battles. The mountainous, forested terrain, especially in the Eastern Central Zone, was poor ink country, limiting their mobility. The Korean War was mainly a war fought by ground forces with air support.

The United States Army deployed eight divisions to Korea—the 1st Cavalry; the 2d, 3d, 7th,24th, 25th, 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions; and the 5th, 29th, and 187th Regimental Combat Teams. The U.S. Army personnel received 78 of the 131 Medals of Honor awarded to military members who served in Korea.

More than 265,000 Navy personnel served in Korea during the war. Throughout the Korean War, U.S. Navy submarines and aircraft patrolled between the Soviet Union and the combat theater, not only to warn of surprise attacks, but to discourage such attacks.

The USAF units flew 720,980 sorties and delivered 476,000 tons of ordnance. Got these numbers FEAF (Far East Air Forces) estimated it had killed nearly 150,000 North Korean and Chinese troops and claimed the destruction of more than 975 aircraft, 800 bridges, 1,100 tanks, 800 locomotives, 9,000 railroad cars, 70,000 motor vehicles, and 80,000 buildings. This damage was

inflicted at the cost of 1,841 men killed, wounded and missing, and 750 aircraft destroyed by the enemy.'

Have they all come home? NO.

POW/MIAs in Korean

There were 7,245 American POWs. Of These 4,418 were returned to the U.S. 2,847 died while POWs.

There were 8,177 Americans classified as missing-in-action. The United States in February 1954 declared them presumed dead.

As of June 2016 there are still more than 7,800 American soldiers still unaccounted for from the Korean War.

Through the efforts of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, the remains of 50 MIAs have been identified in the years 2016 & 2017. Most of these missing have been recovered through Joint Field Activities in North Korea. The US has conducted 33 JFAs in North Korea from 1996 through 2005. For a complete listing of names of those POWs who have been identified please access their website.

**USS DYESS DD 880
WestPac Deployment**

The early days of 1966 saw the crew of DYESS preparing for an impending deployment to the Western Pacific. After a change of Commanding Office, she was underway for a momentous seven month deployment to the waters of the South China Sea. There was a brief excursion for ASW exercise, and then DYESS, along with the other six ships of Destroyer Squadron TWELVE, plus the F. T. Berry (DD-658) formed up and headed south for Rodman, Balboa, by way of the Panama Canal.

After liberty in Panama City, several day of seasickness in the Gulf of Tehantepec, and a fuel stop in San Diego, the squadron turned west for Pearl Harbor. As the squadron neared Hawaii, radio distress circuits came alive with traffic; a small aircraft was out of fuel and about to ditch in the area. DYESS along with USS FISKE (DD-842) were detached to effect the rescue. The plane skimmed into the seas alongside the DYESS and sank 90 seconds later. Both the pilot and the navigator escaped and were brought aboard to DYESS' sick bay.

The remainder of the year saw the DYESS leave Subic Bay for operations in the South China Sea to conduct visual surveillance of Paracel Islands, carry out gunfire support operations in Danang Harbor and vicinity and functioned as a "TOMCAT" in the Tonkin Gulf.

During the assignment deep in the Tonkin Gulf, while serving as a gunship for the nuclear-powered missile ship USS BAINBRIDGE (DLG(N)-25), the DYESS took part in gunfire support in the III Corps area, from June 19 through July 1, 1966, which was clearly the most challenging assignment of the cruise. The following account is taken from a news story released soon after the event:

"DYESS' expended most of her rounds from positions up a shipping channel in the Lower Rung Sat area. Firing in support of search-and-clear operations by South Vietnamese army units in the Mekong Delta, her bombardment was coordinated with jet and helicopter strikes. She is the third destroyer to navigate the shallow tidal waters of the Saigon for gunfire support."

"DYESS' four five-inch guns were active around the clock. During the day they fired by direction of airborne spotters on Viet Cong supply and assembly areas, troop concentrations, gun emplacements and targets of opportunity as close aboard as 2000 yards. Spotters

consistently reported excellent effect and outstanding coverage. At night the ship provided harassment and interdiction fire on area targets."

"Several times, DYESS was hastily summoned from her up-river positions to lend emergency support to South Vietnamese army troops attacking a large Viet Cong base camp twenty miles up the coast from Vung Tao.

With 185 rapid rounds, she destroyed or damaged six structures and several earthen emplacements, silenced ground fire directed at the spotter, and left an undetermined number of Viet Cong casualties."

Once the DYESS completed her assignment as gunfire support, she joined the rest of the squadron at Subic Bay and they all set sail for home by way of the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean. She finally arrived home in Newport Mid-August. A crowd of approximately four thousand (4000) was there to greet the returning ships.

While returning home, the DYESS received word that she had placed second in squadron-wide competition for fiscal year 1966, just behind the squadron flagship USS DAVIS (DD-937). DYESS' supply department finished first in the squadron competition, her weapons department second.

**Toms River, New Jersey
Honors Veterans 1917-2017**

These bronze statues honor our heroes from 1917 to the current conflicts. I saw an article in the Asbury Park Press and had to visit this site in Toms River.

While admiring the entire display, a gentleman walked close and Anne and I said how beautiful this is. He asked if we knew who he is. I said that I didn't know and he told us that he in Jay Grunin. Mr Grunin and

his wife, Linda, have a foundation in support of things like this.

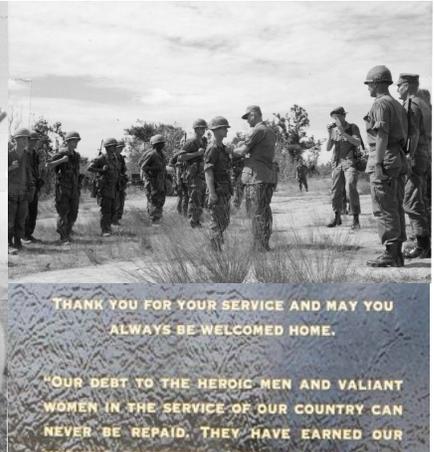
Mr Grunin told us that there are plans for more landscaping and further construction of a visitors center, benches, etc.



Heroes Among Us

It's a small world, someone said. Years ago I attended a Veterans' Day event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC. It was there that I happened to meet Joe Gucheck, who used to work for the same company that I did. Years later, I met Joe at the VA Hospital in East Orange, NJ.

I have a few photos of Joe and his buddies of the 25th Infantry Division, the Wolfhounds.



Enjoying a Bob Hope show

Captured enemy flags



Snippets

Friends *Contributed by Charlie Weaver*

Many years ago, a newlywed young man was sitting on a couch on a hot, humid day, sipping frozen juice during a visit to his father. As he talked about adult life, marriage, responsibilities, and obligations, the father thoughtfully stirred the ice cubes in his glass and cast a clear, sober look on his son.

"Never forget your friends," he advised, "they will become more important as you get older." "Regardless of how much you love your family and the children you happen to have, you will always need friends. Remember to go out with them occasionally, do activities with them, call them."

"What strange advice!" The young man thought. "I just entered the married world, I am an adult and surely my wife and the family that we will start will be everything I need to make sense of my life."

Yet he obeyed his father; Kept in touch with his friends and annually increased their number. Over the years, he became aware that his father knew what he was talking about. Inasmuch as time and nature carry out their designs and mysteries on a man, friends were the bulwarks of his life.

After 60 years of life, here is what he learned:

Time passes.

Life goes on.

The distance separates.

Children grow up. Children cease to be children and become independent. And to the parents it breaks the heart but the children are separate of the parents. Grandchildren too grow up and begin busy lives with little time to spend with the older generation.

Jobs come and go.

Illusions, desires, attraction, sex ... weaken.

People do not do what they should do.

The heart breaks.

The parents die.

Colleagues forget the favors

The races are over.

But, true friends are always there, no matter how long or how many miles away they may be. A friend is never more distant than the reach of a phone, or a need, barring you, intervening in your favor, waiting for you with open arms or blessing your life.

When we started this adventure called LIFE, we did not know of the incredible joys or sorrows that were ahead. We did not know how much we would need from each other. Love your parents, take care of your children, but keep a group of good friends. Dialogue with them but do not impose your criteria.

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I had to get off Bristol *Contributed by Terence Clifford*

I had to get the hell off the Bristol that's why I requested a transfer to the Dyess. The Bristol was a reserve training can and they drove me nuts especially when I jumped out of my rack (top bunk) for a mid watch and landed in the rinks puke that was on the bottom bunk. I went completely BONKERS as I pulled him out of his rack and cleaned the deck with him, made him get a swab and bucket than go take a shower. Needless to say a lot of my shipmates in R division weren't very happy with crazy Clifford yelling and screaming

at midnight at some 18 year old kid that was being threatened to be thrown over the side and crying like a baby. Never saw him again as he moved to another rack. Ahhhhhhh, THE GOOD OLD DAYS of being a Tin Can Sailor. Good job again Ed

Lest we forget on our 4th of July: *Contributed by Joe Kelsey*

Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died.

Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned.

Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army; another had two sons captured.

Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War.

They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists.

Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; men of means, well-educated, but they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw

his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas Mckean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished.

So, take a few minutes while enjoying your 4th of July holiday and silently thank these patriots. It's not much to ask for the price they paid.

Remember: freedom is never free! We thank these early patriots, as well as those patriots now fighting to KEEP our freedom!

I hope you will show your support by sending this to as many people as you can, please. It's time we get the word out that patriotism is NOT a sin, and the Fourth of July has more MEANING to it than beer, fireworks, HOT DOGS, and picnics.....

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Eglin Joint Base Command

located near Ft. Walton, Florida, encompasses a large contingent of Air Force units, Naval Warfare units, and the 7th Army Special Forces, and 6th Army Rangers.

Most folks in the USA don't live in a Military Town, with lots of guys in uniform walking the streets and jets over head daily. They go on with their lives unaware of what a Military Town is all about. And that's OK.... but I want to share with y'all what it's like to live in a Military Town. We see guys in uniform all the time, we have state of the art, high performance aircraft in the air nearby all day long.

We hear the SOUND OF FREEDOM when an F-22, or F-35 streaks over the house.... and we read in the local paper, some times daily, but at least weekly, of the loss of one of our own in combat in the Middle East. And that is what brings me to the reason for this email.

Staff Sergeant Mark DeAlencar was killed on April 8th. He was an Army Special Forces soldier stationed here in the Fort Walton area. He had a family. In January he deployed, again, to Afghanistan. He promised his adopted daughter Octavia that he would be home for her High School Graduation. He didn't make it. But she went to graduation anyway. And in the audience were eighty (80) US Army Special Forces soldiers from her dad's unit in full Parade Dress Uniform. Additionally, they brought THEIR FAMILIES to be with them as well.

And as Octavia ascended the steps to the stage to receive her diploma THEY ALL SILENTLY STOOD UP. And when she was presented her diploma they ALL CHEERED, CLAPPED, WHISTLEDand YES CRIED. Everyone in attendance then stood up and cried and cheered. Octavia had graduated and yes she had lost her Dad.... but she had 80 other DADS to stand there with her and take his place.

I just wanted to share this moment with you.... and remind you that THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN A MILITARY TOWN. THIS is the real America we all love.... and I'm proud to be part of it.

God bless our men in uniform and their families who give so much.

This piece contributed by Charlie Weaver.

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Ed ..worthy of note..

In this morning's Portsmouth N H paper (pg B5), an article took me back....to 1953, DD-857 back in Newport R I, after 6 months in Med. Ens Lincoln has the 2nd Div, is 1st Lt, and has Holiday duty. Being that Bristol RI and DD-857 had the same name...and that Bristol RI has a long history of a July 4th parade .. the Exec felt that ship's company with duty should participate in said parade. The 1st Lt is tasked with mustering a platoon.. decked out in dress whites, incl white puttees ..drawing M-1's and side arms from the small arms locker.. and getting up to the parade assembly area, in Bristol, 10 miles up from Newport.

It was better than sitting around the ship, drinking coffee..but not much better..until we saw the enthusiasm and patriotism surrounding this historic event

If you dial up today's newspaper article..don't be put off by the headline..("Woman dragged by float in Holiday parade" .. read on for the FACTS that THIS PARADE is...A/ the oldest July 4th parade in the Country..B/ continuously assembled since 1785..and C/ drawing 100/000 folks this year.

Suffice to say it drew significantly fewer folks in 1953.

And all who were "volunteered" were proud to have been there, honoring this historic day !!

NOTE: Portsmouth Shipyard, contributes community service by suppling an Honor Guard for the annual Citizenship ceremony in P o r t s m o u t h . Dave (Guns) Lincoln.. DD857 , 1952-55

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Too Busy For a Friend

This story is very touching and I am passing it on to the folks in my life that want to know that I care for them very much

Too Busy for a Friend.....

One day a teacher asked her students to list the names of the other students in the room on two sheets of paper, leaving a space between each name.

Then she told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down.

It took the remainder of the class period to finish their assignment, and as the students left the room, each one handed in the papers.

That Saturday, the teacher wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper, and listed

what everyone else had said about that individual.

On Monday she gave each student his or her list. Before long, the entire class was smiling. 'Really?' she heard whispered. 'I never knew that I meant anything to anyone!' and, 'I didn't know others liked me so much,' were most of the comments.

No one ever mentioned those papers in class again. She never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn't matter. The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another. That group of students moved on.

Several years later, one of the students was killed in Vietnam and his teacher attended the funeral of that special student. She had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. He looked so handsome, so mature.

The church was packed with his friends. One by one those who loved him took a last walk by the coffin. The teacher was the last one to bless the coffin.

As she stood there, one of the soldiers who acted as pallbearer came up to her. 'Were you Mark's math teacher?' he asked. She nodded: 'yes.' Then he said: 'Mark talked about you a lot.'

After the funeral, most of Mark's former classmates went together to a luncheon. Mark's mother and father were there, obviously waiting to speak with his teacher.

'We want to show you something,' his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket 'They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it.'

Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notebook paper that had obviously been taped, folded and refolded

many times. The teacher knew without looking that the papers were the ones on which she had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him.

'Thank you so much for doing that,' Mark's mother said. 'As you can see, Mark treasured it.'

All of Mark's former classmates started to gather around. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, 'I still have my list. It's in the top drawer of my desk at home.'

Chuck's wife said, 'Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album.' 'I have mine too,' Marilyn said. 'It's in my diary'

Then Vicki, another classmate, reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. 'I carry this with me at all times,' Vicki said and without batting an eyelash, she continued: 'I think we all saved our lists'

That's when the teacher finally sat down and cried. She cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again.

The density of people in society is so thick that we forget that life will end one day. And we don't know when that one day will be.

So please, tell the people you love and care for, that they are special and important. Tell them, before it is too late.

And One Way To Accomplish This Is: Forward this message on. If you do not send it, you will have, once again passed up the wonderful opportunity to do something nice and beautiful.

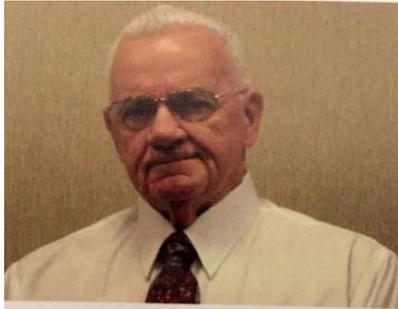
If you've received this, it is because someone cares for you and it means there is probably at least someone for whom you care.

Contributed by Charlie Weaver

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In Memoriam

**Rest in Peace
Ron Obenchain, RD2,
1952-1954**



OBENCHAIN, Ron

Former vice president of our association, Ron Obenchain, died 26 September 2014. We will remember Ron in our memorial service at the conclusion of our reunion in Williamsburg.

Ron served as our association's vice president in 2010

Wallace Rankin, Plank Owner

Shipmates

I'm sorry to report that PO Wally Rankin LT 1945-46 passed away on June 29,2017. Wally was a very warm and friendly individual who regularly attended the reunions until 2009 when his Parkinson's prevented him from further attendance. Wally was 94.

He will be honored at our reunion in September. His obit is shown below.

Tony

Rankin, Wallace L.

94, of Scottsdale AZ passed away on June 29, 2017. Wally was born in Lexington Ne. He is survived by

daughters Pat Childs, Mary Cutter, Peggy Gatchell and Julie Sullens; 13 grand children and 2 great grandchildren. A memorial service will be held on Friday July 7, 2017 at 10 am at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, 23029 North Cave Creek Road, Phoenix Az. Contributions may be made to [The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research](#), Grand Central Station, PO Box 4777, New York NY 10163-4777.



Above photo taken at our reunion in San Diego, 2-5 October 2008, with Jan Sylvia.

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Remember in your prayers Floyd Van Wie

I received this message from Marty Walsh 5 September 2017
All.

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I called Kathleen VanWie a few minutes ago for a progress report on Floyd.

Floyd continues to improve but will be moved to a VA facility on or about Sept. 19th. The VA has a

good spinal damage recovery and therapy program and will cover the entire process.

Floyd was operated on after the hospital stabilized his kidneys and he was well enough for the procedure.

He had a metal plate installed with entry to the spinal damage from the front and back of the effected location.

Floyd can dress himself except for putting his socks on.

He uses a walker to get around, slowly, and is steady on his feet. He does have a problem with hand co-ordination though and that will need more therapy.

Kathleen and her daughter will be visiting Floyd in a few hours and will convey our and the associations best wishes for a continued speedy recover. She says too have a good reunion in Williamsburg.

Floyd was unlucky in falling down but quite lucky in that he didn't kill himself or wind up paralyzed for life.

It took him 14 or 15 hours to drag himself into his trailer but he was unable to pull himself up.

I don't think that dragging himself up the stairs into the trailer did him any good though.

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Marty
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Memorial Service 2017

Presider, Walter Marczak, BTCM, USN (Ret), with the assistance of Paul Kalfelz, Bell Striker, and Ed Lynch, Flower Placer.

William Dobbins, BM2 (PO), 44-46

John B Duncan, LTJG< (PO) 45-46
 Robert H Fink RD2, 57-59
 Clayton Hall, SK3, 46-47
 Samuel J Lewis, MM1, 48-53
 John McDonald, QM3, 60-62
 Ronald E Obenchain, RD2, 52-54
 Wallace (Wally) Rankin LT
 Ted Taper, BM3, 52-57
 Erwin (Erv) Zimmer, ET2, 57-58

The Distinguished Service

Cross is awarded to a person who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguishes himself or herself by extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a Medal of Honor; while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing/foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing Armed Force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The act or acts of heroism must have been so notable and have involved risk of life so extraordinary as to set the individual apart from his or her comrades.

MIA Update:

*Contributed by Charlie Weaver*The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of the remains of five Americans who had been missing in action from WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- Air Force Capt. Robert E. Holton, 27, of Butte, Mont., will be buried July 22 in his hometown. Holton was an F-4D pilot assigned to the 497th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On Jan. 29, 1969, Holton flew an armed

reconnaissance mission over southern Laos. The flight lead cleared Holton to engage a target, and ordnance was seen impacting the ground. Aircrews reported seeing a large fireball on the ground in the vicinity of the target immediately thereafter. No radio transmissions were received, and no parachutes were seen. Efforts to make contact with the crew continued until the remaining planes were forced to leave the area due to low fuel. Holton was subsequently declared missing in action.

-- Army Pfc. Charles C. Follese, 20, of Minn., will be buried July 25 in his hometown. Follese was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment. On Nov. 29, 1950, Follese was part of a patrol sent to recover casualties near Hajoyang-ni, North Korea, when his patrol was ambushed. Follese could not be accounted for after the ambush and was declared killed in action on Nov. 30, 1950.

-- Marine Reserve Cpl. Raymond C. Snapp was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division. Snapp's unit landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll on Nov. 20, 1943, against stiff Japanese resistance. Snapp was killed on the first day of the battle. Interment services are pending.

-- Marine Cpl. Anthony G. Guerriero was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, 2nd Marine Division. Guerriero's unit landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll on Nov. 20, 1943, against stiff Japanese resistance. Guerriero was killed Nov. 21, 1943. Interment services are pending.

-- Air Force Maj. James B. White was assigned to the 357th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On Nov. 24, 1969, contact with White's F-105D

was lost after a single pass attacking enemy troops in Laos. On November 28, wreckage thought to be from White's aircraft was spotted by an Air America helicopter. A Laotian ground team searched the area and found only small pieces of wreckage. White was subsequently declared missing in action. Interment services are pending.

The Secret Rescue

Harold Hayes, the last surviving member of a band of airborne American medics and nurses who crashed-landed in Nazi-occupied Albania in 1943 and survived German attacks, blizzards and horrific privations on a 600-mile trek to their rescue on the Adriatic coast, died on Sunday in Medford, Ore. He was 94.

His death, at a hospital, followed an operation to remove a blood clot from his leg, his daughter Margaret Bleakley said.

The survival of the 30 noncombatants was a long-held secret of World War II: the story of 13 female nurses, 13 male medics and the four-man crew of a medical evacuation plane who were stranded behind enemy lines for nine weeks, hiding in primitive villages and caves in wintry mountains, afflicted with lice and dysentery, often near starvation and hunted by German patrols.

Their odyssey was classified during the war and for years afterward to protect partisan fighters, Allied agents and villagers who gave them food, shelter and guidance. Some were shot by the Germans for their acts of kindness, and after the war, as rumors became death sentences, those even suspected of helping the Americans were executed by Albania's Communist dictator, Enver Hoxha, whose rule ended with his death in 1985.

“For many years, I didn’t say anything about what happened in Albania,” Mr. Hayes said in a 2015 telephone interview with The New York Times from his assisted-living home in Medford. “After the war was over, Hoxha was ruthless. If he discovered the names of anyone who had helped us, he had them and their families executed.”

Mr. Hayes had no special role in the group’s survival, but by outliving all his wartime comrades, he became a last conduit for their story, which was related in a 1999 memoir by one of the nurses, and more recently in several books, notably “The Secret Rescue” (2013), by Cate Lineberry, whose account relied heavily on Mr. Hayes’s recollections.

The perilous adventure began two months after Italy surrendered and Allied forces invaded Italy to begin pushing the Germans back across Europe. On Nov. 8, 1943, the nurses, medics and fliers of the Army Air Force’s 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron took off from Catania, Sicily, bound for Bari, on Italy’s east coast, where hundreds of wounded troops awaited air evacuation.

Their twin-engine cargo plane carried no weapons, but the pilot, First Lt. Charles Thrasher, 22, anticipated no fighting. With him were a co-pilot, radio operator and crew chief. The nurses, all second lieutenants, were 22 to 32 years old. The medics, including Mr. Hayes, 21, from Indianola, Iowa, were all equivalent to staff sergeants and ranged in age from 21 to 36.

An hour into the flight, the plane became lost in a huge storm over the Adriatic Sea. Its compass and communications failed. Blown 100 miles off course, it crossed the coast of Albania and was intercepted by German fighters and attacked by anti-aircraft guns. It plunged to a belly landing in a marsh 25 miles inland. Willis Shumway, 23, the crew chief, was the only casualty,

with a knee injury that left him unable to walk.

The disoriented Americans had no idea where they were. Fearing a fuel explosion, they scrambled out of the plane and encountered their first bit of luck. Striding out of a woods was a band of rugged-looking men with rifles and daggers. One spoke a little English. He was Hasan Gina, an anti-German partisan leader. He told the Americans they were in Albania. Later, they would learn that they were 150 miles east of Bari, on the wrong side of the Adriatic, surrounded by German forces that had occupied Albania for months, and were caught in a civil war between rival partisan groups.

The Americans knew almost nothing of Albania, a small, mostly Muslim country that had changed little in centuries. The mountainous terrain was dotted with impoverished villages. There were no railroads and few roads. Mules and horses were the main transportation. There was little running water or electricity. Winters were brutal, food was scarce, and blood feuds were common among the ferociously proud peoples.

With only a general plan to reach the west coast and somehow cross the Adriatic to Italy, the Americans began walking in the wrong direction. Over the ensuing weeks, guided by the partisans, they trekked through mountains and valleys, sometimes cutting back or traveling in circles to avoid German patrols, living in the open or sheltering in villages and sharing cornbread with peasants.

The Americans were soon listed as missing in action, and War Department telegrams, beginning “regret to inform you,” were sent to their families back home.

The survivors, meantime, carried Sergeant Shumway on a stretcher made of seats from the plane; they later found pack animals for him. After five days, they rested at a

partisan-controlled town called Berat, where they were cheered, mistaken for the vanguard of an Allied invasion to liberate Albania. They also met other partisan leaders, and learned of a British agent who had recently parachuted into the country.

Their respite lasted only a few days. Then, they awoke to gunfire and the explosion of artillery shells as German forces entered the town. In the ensuing confusion, German planes strafed a truck carrying some of the escaping Americans. Three nurses were separated from the main group and left behind in Berat; they took refuge in a farmhouse, and remained in hiding in the area for four months.

The main group of Americans climbed on foot to a mountain village and were caught in a crossfire between partisan groups. “It was the first time the Americans had heard of the rival group, and they were beginning to realize they were in as much danger from the country’s internal battle as they were from the Germans,” Ms. Lineberry wrote in “The Secret Rescue.”

They encountered other perils. “Some of the blankets offered to them to ward off the cold night air were infested with fleas and lice,” the author wrote. “Since they’d crashed, most of them had been unable to bathe, aside from splashing some water on their faces and arms from mountain streams or an occasional basin, and they were all filthy and now battling fleas, lice and the GI’s,” Army slang for diarrhea.

The Americans were often unable to find food. Facing starvation, they made tea by boiling straw and ate berries that worsened their diarrhea. Sharing with peasants was sometimes a culture shock. Mr. Hayes and another medic saw a sheep’s head roasted over coals, then split in half with an ax.

“The Americans watched wide-eyed as two women each took one-half of the head and ate everything, including the eyeballs,” Ms. Lineberry wrote. “Nothing was wasted.”

As autumn waned, blizzards enveloped the Americans. Their clothing was too thin. Their shoes were worn out. “Though all their feet soon felt like blocks of ice and their bodies shivered, they knew they had to keep going,” Ms. Lineberry wrote. “The snow was coming down so fast they could barely see the person in front of them, but they had to stay together to avoid losing one another in the blinding white storm.”

On Nov. 27, British intelligence in Albania learned from partisans that the American plane had crashed and that the nurses, medics and crew were alive, trying to reach the coast. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Allied commander in Europe, as well as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the families of the missing were told.

In December, an American rescue plan was developed, led by Army Capt. Lloyd G. Smith, 24, who was assigned to the Office of Strategic Services, precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency. Under cover of darkness, he slipped onto the heavily guarded Albanian coast by boat and set up a base camp in a cave in the cliffs overlooking the Adriatic. Others joined him, and they moved inland to find the Americans.

The British, meantime, organized a second rescue effort under Lt. Gavan Duffy, a secret agent who with a small team had reached Albania months earlier by parachute and on foot. Through partisan contacts, he found the Americans in eastern Albania and began leading them westward, intending to reach the coast.

But halfway there, at Gjirokaster, German troops blocked the way, and

the Americans were too sick and exhausted to go on. He radioed for an American air rescue. Two C-47 cargo planes flew in with fighter escorts. But the Germans disrupted the landing, and Lieutenant Duffy called it off.

The Americans, after the euphoria of nearly being rescued, were crushed. But they resumed their journey, and with American and British help reached the coast. On Jan. 9, after a 63-day ordeal, 27 Americans — 10 nurses and 17 medics and fliers — boarded a British launch and crossed to Italy.

Three nurses remained behind in German-occupied Berat. Captain Lloyd Smith brought them to safety in March 1944. They rode pack mules most of the way to the coast and were met by a torpedo boat, which took them across the Adriatic.

After the war, Mr. Hayes returned to civilian life, attended Iowa State College and became an aeronautical engineer for North American Aviation, designing military planes and conducting studies for the Air Force and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration until he retired in 1984.

He married the former Betty Allen in 1944. She survives him, as do two daughters, Margaret Bleakley and Victoria Sprott; two brothers, Karl and James; a sister, Virginia McCall; two grandsons and a great-granddaughter.

Harold Lyle Hayes was born in Pekin, Iowa, on April 11, 1922, to Ralph and Jenella Van Gorp Hayes. He graduated from high school in Indianola in 1940. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, he was drafted, volunteered as a medic and by 1943 was in Sicily, flying evacuation missions.

“When he first returned to Allied lines, he had nightmares of being chased,” Ms. Lineberry wrote of Mr. Hayes. “Those faded with time, but as was true of many in the group, he rarely talked about his ordeal over the years.”

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OUR MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATED IN the Czech Republic - Czechoslovakia

A bit of History -- Czech Republic / Czechoslovakia remembering and honoring AMERICA and our soldiers....



This is an amazing story of remembrance. In the Czech Republic , the school children of the equivalent of fifth grade are each assigned one of the American and Canadian liberators buried there. Their grave is the student's responsibility for the year and they learn all there is to know of their own hero. Their surviving family is sent letters and they respond to the annual child who tends their loved one's grave.

No apology needed here!

Have you ever wondered if anyone in Europe remembers America 's sacrifice in World War II? There is an answer in a small town in the Czech Republic . The town called Pilsen (Plzen).

Every 5 years, Pilsen conducts the Liberation Celebration of the City of Pilsen in the Czech Republic . May 6th, 2010, marked the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Pilsen by General George Patton's 3rd Army. Pilsen is the town that every American should visit. Because they love America and the American Soldier.

Even 65 years later... by the thousands, The citizens of Pilsen came to say thank you. Lining the streets of Pilsen for miles. From the large crowds, to quiet reflective



moments, including this American family's private time to honor and remember their American hero.



This is the crash site of Lt. Virgil P. Kirkham, the last recorded American USAAF pilot killed in Europe during WWII. It was Lt. Kirkham's 82nd mission and one that he volunteered to go on.

At the time, this 20-year-old pilot's P-47 Thunderbolt plane was shot down, a young 14-year-old Czech



girl, Zdenka Sladkova, was so moved by his sacrifice she made a vow to care for him and his memory. For 65 straight years, Zdenka, now 79-years-old, took on the responsibility to care for Virgil's crash site and memorial near her home.

On May 4th, she was recognized by the Mayor of Zdenka's home town of Trhanova , Czech Republic , for her sacrifice and extraordinary effort to honor this American hero.

Another chapter in this important story... the Czech people are teaching their children about America 's sacrifice for their freedom.

American Soldiers, young and old, are the Rock Stars these children and their parents want autographs from.

Yes, Rock Stars! As they patiently waited for his autograph, the respect this little Czech boy and his father have for our troops serving today was heartwarming and inspirational.

The Brian LaViolette Foundation established The Scholarship of Honor in tribute to General George S. Patton and the American Soldier, past and present.

Each year, a different military hero will be honored in tribute to General Patton's memory and their mission to liberate Europe . This award will be presented to a graduating senior who will be entering the military or a form of community service such as fireman, policeman, teaching or nursing -- a cause greater than self. The student will be from 1 of the 5 high schools in Pilsen , Czech Republic .

The first award will be presented in May 2011 in honor of Lt. Virgil Kirkham, that young 20-year-old P-47 pilot killed 65 years ago in the final days of WWII.

Presenting Virgil's award will be someone who knows the true meaning of service and sacrifice... someone who looks a lot like Virgil. Marion Kirkham, Virgil's brother, who himself served during WWII in the United States Army Air Corps!!!

In closing... Here is what the city of Pilsen thinks of General Patton's grandson. George Patton Waters (another Rock Star!) we're proud to say, serves on Brian's Foundation board.

And it's front page news over there not buried in the middle of the social section.

Brigadier General Miroslav Zizka, 1st Deputy Chief of Staff, Ministry of Defense, Czech Armed Forces.

Thanks to Tom Leavy for this great bit of American history. Please add it to your little known GOOD storiesd about the Americans we rarely hear about. Kelley please see that Sue Paterno gets a copy. Her father, Penn State Architect Augustus Pohland, was a Tech Sergeant with a Combat Engineer Battalion attached to Patton's Third Army.Lee Kolankiewicz

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TO CHILDREN OF A GENERATION

Born in the 1930's and 40's, we exist as a very special age cohort. We are the Silent Generation.

We are the smallest number of children born since the early 1900's. We are the "last ones."

We are the last generation, climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war which rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.

We are the last to remember ration books for everything from gas to sugar to shoes to stoves.

We saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans.

We hand mixed 'white stuff' with 'yellow stuff' to make fake butter.

We saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available.

We can remember milk being delivered to our house early in the morning and placed in the "milk box" on the porch. [A friend's mother delivered milk in a horse drawn cart.] We sometimes fed the horse, and our dog, Spot, a Fox Terrier, would greet the milkman when he made our delivery, then he would ride in Glenn's truck till the end of his route, when Glenn would drive by the house and let Spot off the truck just in time to greet us coming home from elementary school.

Many of us are the last to hear Roosevelt 's radio assurances and to see gold stars in the front windows of our grieving neighbors.

Many of us can also remember the parades on August 15, 1945; VJ Day.

We saw the 'boys' home from the war, build their little houses, pouring the cellar, tar papering it over and living there until they could afford the time and money to build it out.

We are the last generation who spent much of our childhood without television; instead we imagined what we heard on the radio.

As we all like to brag, with no TV, we spent our childhood "playing outside until the street lights came on."

We did play outside and we did play on our own.

We turned the hose or the fire hydrants on and ran through the spray to play in the water.

The lack of television in our early years meant, for most of us, that we had little real understanding of what the world was like.

Our Saturday afternoons, if at the movies, gave us newsreels of the war sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons.

Telephones were one to a house, often shared and hung on the wall.

Computers were called calculators, they only added and were hand cranked; typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage, and changing the ribbon.

The 'Internet' and 'GOOGLE' were words that didn't exist.

Newspapers and magazines were written for adults and the news was broadcast on our table radio in the evening by H.V Kaltenborne and Gabriel Heatter.

We are the last group who had to find out for ourselves.

As we grew up, the country was exploding with growth.

The G.I. Bill gave returning veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow.

VA loans fanned a housing boom.

Pent up demand coupled with new installment payment plans put factories to work.

New highways would bring jobs and mobility.

The veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics.

In the late 40's and early 50's the country seemed to lie in the embrace of brisk but quiet order as it gave birth to its new middle class (which became known as 'Baby Boomers').

The radio network expanded from 3 stations to thousands of stations.

The telephone started to become a common method of communications and "Faxes" sent hard copy around the world.

Our parents were suddenly free from the confines of the depression and the war and they threw

themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.

We weren't neglected but we weren't today's all-consuming family focus.

They were glad we played by ourselves 'until the street lights came on.'

They were busy discovering the post war world.

Most of us had no life plan, but with the unexpected virtue of ignorance and an economic rising tide we simply stepped into the world and started to find out what the world was about.

We entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where we were welcomed.

Based on our naive belief that there was more where this came from, we shaped life as we went.

We enjoyed a luxury; we felt secure in our future. Of course, just as today, not all Americans shared in this experience.

Depression poverty was deep rooted.

Polio was still a crippler.

The Korean War was a dark presage in the early 50's and by mid-decade school children were ducking under desks.

Russia built the "Iron Curtain" and China became Red China .

Eisenhower sent the first 'advisers' to Vietnam ; and years later, we went to war there.

Castro set up camp in Cuba and Khrushchev came to power.

We are the last generation to experience an interlude when there were no existential threats to our homeland.

We came of age in the 40's and 50's. The war was over and the cold war, terrorism, technological upheaval, "global warming", and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with insistent unease.

Only our generation experienced both a time of apocalyptic war and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty. We have lived through both.

We grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better not worse.

We are the Silent Generation - "The Last Ones".

More than 99.9% of us are either retired or deceased, and feel privileged to have "lived in the best of times"!

"Life's trials are not easy, But in God's will, each has a purpose."

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World War Two Aviation Facts -Contributed by Joe Kelsey

Some very interesting information that most of us would not normally know...

Most Americans who were not adults during WWII have no understanding of the magnitude of it, nor any of the following information...

This listing of some of the aircraft facts gives a bit of insight to it.

276,000 aircraft were manufactured in the U.S.

43,000 planes lost overseas, including 23,000 in combat.

14,000 lost in the continental U.S.

The U.S. civilian population maintained a dedicated effort for four years, many working long hours seven days per week and often also volunteering for other work. WWII was the largest human effort in history.

Statistics are from Flight Journal magazine.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY (cost of an aircraft in WWII dollars)

- B-17 \$204,370. P-40 \$44,892.
- B-24 \$215,516. P-47 \$85,578.
- B-25 \$142,194. P-51 \$51,572.
- B-26 \$192,426. C-47 \$88,574.
- B-29 \$605,360. PT-17 \$15,052.
- P-38 \$97,147. AT-6 \$22,952.

PLANES A DAY WORLDWIDE

From Germany 's invasion of Poland Sept. 1, 1939 and ending with Japan's surrender Sept. 2, 1945 --- 2,433 days

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PLANES A DAY WORLDWIDE

From Germany 's invasion of Poland Sept. 1, 1939 and ending with Japan 's surrender Sept. 2, 1945 --- 2,433 days. From 1942 onward, America averaged 170 planes lost a day.

How many is a 1,000 planes? B-17 production (12,731) wingtip to wingtip would extend 250 miles. 1,000 B-17s carried 2.5 million gallons of high octane fuel and required 10,000 airmen to fly and fight them.

THE NUMBERS GAME

9.7 billion gallons of gasoline consumed, 1942-1945.

107.8 million hours flown, 1943-1945.

459.7 billion rounds of aircraft ammo fired overseas, 1942-1945.

7.9 million bombs dropped overseas, 1943-1945.

2.3 million combat sorties, 1941-1945 (one sortie = one takeoff).

299,230 aircraft accepted, 1940-1945.

808,471 aircraft engines accepted, 1940-1945.

799,972 propellers accepted, 1940-1945.

Sources: Rene Francillon, Japanese Aircraft of the Pacific war; Cajus Bekker, The Luftwaffe Diaries; Ray Wagner, American Combat Planes; Wikipedia.

According to the AAF Statistical Digest, in less than four years (December 1941- August 1945), the US Army Air Forces lost 14,903 pilots, aircrew and assorted personnel plus 13,873 airplanes --- inside the continental United States. They were the result of 52,651 aircraft accidents (6,039 involving fatalities) in 45 months.

Think about those numbers. They average 1,170 aircraft accidents per month --- nearly 40 a day. (Less than one accident in four resulted in totaled aircraft, however.)

It gets worse.....

Almost 1,000 Army planes disappeared enroute from the US to foreign climes. But an eye-watering 43,581 aircraft were lost overseas including 22,948 on combat missions (18,418 against the Western Axis) and 20,633 attributed to non-combat causes overseas.

In a single 376 plane raid in August 1943, 60 B-17s were shot down. That was a 16 percent loss rate and meant 600 empty bunks in England . In 1942-43 it was statistically impossible for bomber crews to complete a 25-mission tour in Europe .

Pacific theatre losses were far less (4,530 in combat) owing to smaller forces committed. The worst B-29 mission, against Tokyo on May 25,

1945, cost 26 Superfortresses, 5.6 percent of the 464 dispatched from the Marianas . On an average, 6,600 American servicemen died per month during WWII, about 220 a day. By the end of the war, over 40,000 airmen were killed in combat theatres and another 18,000 wounded. Some 12,000 missing men were declared dead, including a number "liberated" by the Soviets but never returned. More than 41,000 were captured, half of the 5,400 held by the Japanese died in captivity, compared with one-tenth in German hands. Total combat casualties were pegged at 121,867.

U.S. manpower made up the deficit. The AAF's peak strength was reached in 1944 with 2,372,000 personnel, nearly twice the previous year's figure. The losses were huge---but so were production totals. From 1941 through 1945, American industry delivered more than 276,000 military aircraft. That number was enough not only for U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps, but for allies as diverse as Britain , Australia , China and Russia . In fact, from 1943 onward, America produced more planes than Britain and Russia combined. And more than Germany and Japan together 1941-45. However, our enemies took massive losses. Through much of 1944, the Luftwaffe sustained uncontrolled hemorrhaging, reaching 25 percent of aircrews and 40 planes a month. And in late 1944 into 1945, nearly half the pilots in Japanese squadrons had flown fewer than 200 hours. The disparity of two years before had been completely reversed.

Experience Level:

Uncle Sam sent many of his sons to war with absolute minimums of training. Some fighter pilots entered combat in 1942 with less than one hour in their assigned aircraft.

The 357th Fighter Group (often known as The Yoxford Boys) went to England in late 1943 having trained on P-39s. The group never saw a Mustang until shortly before its first combat mission. A high-

time P-51 pilot had 30 hours in type. Many had fewer than five hours. Some had one hour. With arrival of new aircraft, many combat units transitioned in combat. The attitude was, "They all have a stick and a throttle. Go fly `em." When the famed 4th Fighter Group converted from P-47s to P-51s in February 1944, there was no time to stand down for an orderly transition. The Group commander, Col. Donald Blakeslee, said, "You can learn to fly `51s on the way to the target.

A future P-47 ace said, "I was sent to England to die." He was not alone. Some fighter pilots tucked their wheels in the well on their first combat mission with one previous flight in the aircraft. Meanwhile, many bomber crews were still learning their trade: of Jimmy Doolittle's 15 pilots on the April 1942 Tokyo raid, only five had won their wings before 1941. All but one of the 16 copilots were less than a year out of flight school.

In WWII flying safety took a back seat to combat. The AAF's worst accident rate was recorded by the A-36 Invader version of the P-51: a staggering 274 accidents per 100,000 flying hours. Next worst were the P-39 at 245, the P-40 at 188, and the P-38 at 139. All were Allison powered.

Bomber wrecks were fewer but more expensive. The B-17 and B-24 averaged 30 and 35 accidents per 100,000 flight hours, respectively-- a horrific figure considering that from 1980 to 2000 the Air Force's major mishap rate was less than 2.

The B-29 was even worse at 40; the world's most sophisticated, most capable and most expensive bomber was too urgently needed to stand down for mere safety reasons. The AAF set a reasonably high standard for B-29 pilots, but the desired figures were seldom attained. The original cadre of the 58th Bomb Wing was to have 400 hours of multi-engine time, but there were not enough experienced pilots to meet the criterion. Only ten percent

had overseas experience. Conversely, when a \$2.1 billion B-2 crashed in 2008, the Air Force initiated a two-month "safety pause" rather than declare a "stand down", let alone grounding.

The B-29 was no better for maintenance. Though the R3350 was known as a complicated, troublesome power-plant, no more than half the mechanics had previous experience with the Duplex Cyclone. But they made it work.

Navigators:

Perhaps the greatest unsung success story of AAF training was Navigators. The Army graduated some 50,000 during the War. And many had never flown out of sight of land before leaving "Uncle Sugar" for a war zone. Yet the huge majority found their way across oceans and continents without getting lost or running out of fuel --- a stirring tribute to the AAF's educational establishments.

Cadet To Colonel:

It was possible for a flying cadet at the time of Pearl Harbor to finish the war with eagles on his shoulders. That was the record of John D. Landers, a 21-year-old Texan, who was commissioned a second lieutenant on December 12, 1941. He joined his combat squadron with 209 hours total flight time, including 20 in P-40s. He finished the war as a full colonel, commanding an 8th Air Force Group --- at age 24.

As the training pipeline filled up, however those low figures became exceptions.

By early 1944, the average AAF fighter pilot entering combat had logged at least 450 hours, usually including 250 hours in training. At the same time, many captains and first lieutenants claimed over 600 hours.

FACT:

At its height in mid-1944, the Army Air Forces had 2.6 million people and nearly 80,000 aircraft of all types.

Today the US Air Force employs 327,000 active personnel (plus 170,000 civilians) with 5,500+

manned and perhaps 200 unmanned aircraft. The 2009 figures represent about 12 percent of the manpower and 7 percent of the airplanes of the WWII peak.

IN SUMMATION:

Whether there will ever be another war like that experienced in 1940-45 is doubtful, as fighters and bombers have given way to helicopters and remotely-controlled drones over Afghanistan and Iraq . But within living memory, men left the earth in 1,000-plane formations and fought major battles five miles high, leaving a legacy that remains timeless.

This is an excellent summary of the effort required in WWII. It focuses on the American side of things, but the British, Germans and Japanese expended comparable energy and experienced similar costs. Just one example for the Luftwaffe; about 1/3 of the Bf109s built were lost in non-combat crashes. After Midway, the Japanese experience level declined markedly, with the loss of so many higher-time naval pilots. This piece is worth saving in hard copy.

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U.S. manpower made up the deficit. The AAF's peak strength was reached in 1944 with 2,372,000 personnel, nearly twice the previous year's figure. The losses were huge---but so were production totals. From 1941 through 1945, American industry delivered more than 276,000 military aircraft. That number was enough not only for U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps, but for allies as diverse as Britain , Australia , China and Russia . In fact, from 1943 onward, America produced more planes than Britain and Russia combined. And more than Germany and Japan together 1941-45. However, our enemies took massive losses. Through much of 1944, the Luftwaffe sustained uncontrolled hemorrhaging, reaching 25 percent of aircrews and 40 planes a month. And in late 1944 into 1945, nearly half the pilots in Japanese squadrons had flown fewer than 200 hours. The disparity of two years before had been completely reversed.

Experience Level:

Uncle Sam sent many of his sons to war with absolute minimums of training. Some fighter pilots entered combat in 1942 with less than one hour in their assigned aircraft. The 357th Fighter Group (often known as The Yoxford Boys) went to England in late 1943 having trained on P-39s. The group never saw a Mustang until shortly before its first combat mission. A high-time P-51 pilot had 30 hours in type. Many had fewer than five hours. Some had one hour. With arrival of new aircraft, many combat units transitioned in combat. The attitude was, "They all have a stick and a throttle. Go fly `em." When the famed 4th Fighter Group converted from P-47s to P-51s in February 1944, there was no time to stand

down for an orderly transition. The Group commander, Col. Donald Blakeslee, said, "You can learn to fly `51s on the way to the target.

A future P-47 ace said, "I was sent to England to die." He was not alone. Some fighter pilots tucked their wheels in the well on their first combat mission with one previous flight in the aircraft. Meanwhile, many bomber crews were still learning their trade: of Jimmy Doolittle's 15 pilots on the April 1942 Tokyo raid, only five had won their wings before 1941. All but one of the 16 copilots were less than a year out of flight school.

In WWII flying safety took a back seat to combat. The AAF's worst accident rate was recorded by the A-36 Invader version of the P-51: a staggering 274 accidents per 100,000 flying hours. Next worst were the P-39 at 245, the P-40 at 188, and the P-38 at 139. All were Allison powered.

Bomber wrecks were fewer but more expensive. The B-17 and B-24 averaged 30 and 35 accidents per 100,000 flight hours, respectively-- a horrific figure considering that from 1980 to 2000 the Air Force's major mishap rate was less than 2. The B-29 was even worse at 40; the world's most sophisticated, most capable and most expensive bomber was too urgently needed to stand down for mere safety reasons. The AAF set a reasonably high standard for B-29 pilots, but the desired figures were seldom attained. The original cadre of the 58th Bomb Wing was to have 400 hours of multi-engine time, but there were not enough experienced pilots to meet the criterion. Only ten percent had overseas experience. Conversely, when a \$2.1 billion B-2 crashed in 2008, the Air Force initiated a two-month "safety pause" rather than declare a "stand down", let alone grounding.

The B-29 was no better for maintenance. Though the R3350 was known as a complicated,

troublesome power-plant, no more than half the mechanics had previous experience with the Duplex Cyclone. But they made it work.

Navigators:

Perhaps the greatest unsung success story of AAF training was Navigators. The Army graduated some 50,000 during the War. And many had never flown out of sight of land before leaving "Uncle Sugar" for a war zone. Yet the huge majority found their way across oceans and continents without getting lost or running out of fuel --- a stirring tribute to the AAF's educational establishments.

Cadet To Colonel: It was possible for a flying cadet at the time of Pearl Harbor to finish the war with eagles on his shoulders. That was the record of John D. Landers, a 21-year-old Texan, who was commissioned a second lieutenant on December 12, 1941. He joined his combat squadron with 209 hours total flight time, including 20 in P-40s. He finished the war as a full colonel, commanding an 8th Air Force Group --- at age 24.

As the training pipeline filled up, however those low figures became exceptions.

By early 1944, the average AAF fighter pilot entering combat had logged at least 450 hours, usually including 250 hours in training. At the same time, many captains and first lieutenants claimed over 600 hours.

FACT:

At its height in mid-1944, the Army Air Forces had 2.6 million people and nearly 80,000 aircraft of all types. Today the US Air Force employs 327,000 active personnel plus 170,000 civilians with 5,500+ manned and perhaps 200 unmanned aircraft. The 2009 figures represent about 12 percent of the manpower and 7 percent of the airplanes of the WWII peak.

IN SUMMATION:

Whether there will ever be another war like that experienced in 1940-45 is doubtful, as fighters and bombers have given way to helicopters and

remotely-controlled drones over Afghanistan and Iraq . But within living memory, men left the earth in 1,000-plane formations and fought major battles five miles high, leaving a legacy that remains timeless.

This is an excellent summary of the effort required in WWII. It focuses on the American side of things, but the British, Germans and Japanese expended comparable energy and experienced similar costs. Just one example for the Luftwaffe; about 1/3 of the Bf109s built were lost in non-combat crashes. After Midway, the Japanese experience level declined markedly, with the loss of so many higher-time naval pilots. This piece is worth saving in hard copy.

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Requests for Prayers

Many of our shipmates suffer from ailments most of the time. Some are suffering from ailments as a result of their service to the USA.

As you all know, exposure to Agent Orange causes horrible diseases to those exposed. We have shipmates who suffer from such exposure.

Let us remember in our prayers those shipmates and all veterans who were exposed to that terrible defoliant in Vietnam.



Let's not forget our those veterans who were exposed to toxins in

their service during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.



Since 2001, many veterans have been exposed to toxins burned in burn pits at various FOBs (Forward Operating Bases).

Korean Demilitarized Zone-Exposure along the demilitarized zone in Korea between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971

Several of our shipmates have served in combat in Vietnam and Korea. Let us keep them in our minds as we pray for the affects that exposure to combat has had on their lives since that service.

Floyd Van Wie suffered a cervical spine injury in a fall at his hunting lodge. Floyd was alone at the time and lay almost helpless for almost 3 days. Floyd survived the fall when his wife, Kathleen, got suspicious when she had not heard from him. She found him and got medical help immediately.

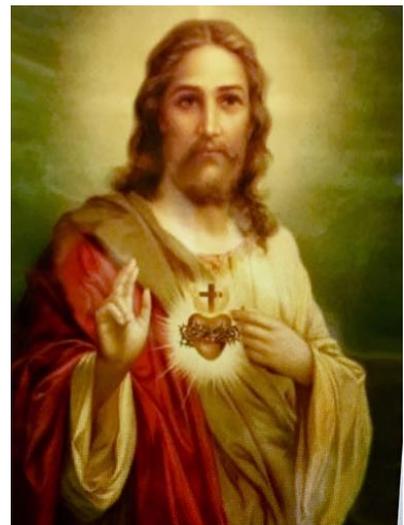
Floyd had cervical spinal surgery in which surgeons inserted a metal plate to support the cervical vertebrae. Post surgery: Floyd has been transferred to a VA rehab facility where he will spend about a year .

Floyd lives in Baldwinsville, NY, which is near Syracuse, NY.

Ramon Soto is suffering from a rare blood disease. Please remember Ramon (Ray) in your prayers.

Marty Walsh has pending cardiac surgery to replace a couple of failing valves. Marty postponed this surgery so that he could attend our reunion.

Like all of us, no one is getting any younger. I promise to remember all of my shipmates in my daily prayers I will especially remember those suffering from military service and also our association leaders who spend countless hours to ensure that we enjoy our reunions



.....

Humor in Uniform

A poor old Navy Chief...

This is the kind of Marine stories I like to hear!

The rain had stopped and there was a big puddle in front of the bar just outside the American Legion Post. A rumpled old Navy Chief

was standing near the edge with a fishing line in the puddle. A curious young Marine fighter pilot came over to him and asked what he was doing. "Fishing," the old Master Chief simply said.

"Poor old chief," the Marine officer thought to himself and invited the old Navy Chief into the bar for a drink. As he felt he should start a conversation while they were sipping their spirits, the young jet pilot winked at another pilot and asked the Chief, "How many have you caught today?"

"You're number 14," the old Chief answered, taking another sip from his double shot of 12-year-old Scotch, "2 Air Force, 3 Navy and 9 Marines." Do not argue with an idiot He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

Contributed by David "Guns" Lincoln

AN ACTUAL CRAIG'S LIST PERSONALS AD

To the Guy Who Tried to Mug Me in Downtown Savannah night before last.

Date: 2017-01-17, 1:43 am. E.S.T.

I was the guy wearing the black Burberry jacket that you demanded that I hand over, shortly after you pulled the knife on me and my girlfriend, threatening our lives. You also asked for my girlfriend's purse and earrings. I can only hope that you somehow come across this rather important message.

First, I'd like to apologize for your embarrassment; I didn't expect you to actually crap in your pants when I drew my pistol after you took my jacket.. The evening was not that cold, and I was wearing the jacket for a reason.. my girlfriend was happy that I just returned safely from my 2nd tour as a Combat Marine in Afghanistan . She had just bought me that Kimber

Custom Model 1911 45 ACP pistol for my birthday, and we had picked up a shoulder holster for it that very evening. Obviously you agree that it is a very intimidating weapon when pointed at your head ... isn't it?!

I know it probably wasn't fun walking back to wherever you'd come from with crap in your pants.

I'm sure it was even worse walking bare-footed since I made you leave your shoes, cell phone, and wallet with me. (That prevented you from calling or running to your buddies to come help mug us again).

After I called your mother or "Momma" as you had her listed in your cell, I explained the entire episode of what you'd done. Then I went and filled up my gas tank as well as those of four other people in the gas station, -- on your credit card. The guy with the big motor home took 153 gallons and was extremely grateful!

I gave your shoes to a homeless guy outside Vinnie Van Go Go's, along with all the cash in your wallet.

[That made his day!]

I then threw your wallet into the big pink "pimp mobile" that was parked at the curb after I broke the windshield and side window and keyed the entire driver's side of the car.

Earlier, I managed to get in two threatening phone calls to the DA's office and one to the FBI, while mentioning President Trump as my possible target.

The FBI guy seemed really intense and we had a nice long chat (I guess while he traced your number etc.). In a way, perhaps I should apologize for not killing you ... but I feel this type of retribution

is a far more appropriate punishment for your threatened crime. I wish you well as you try to sort through some of these rather immediate pressing issues, and can only hope that you have the opportunity to reflect upon, and perhaps reconsider, the career path

you've chosen to pursue in life.. Remember, next time you might not be so lucky. Have a good day! Thoughtfully yours, **Semper fi,** Alex

If you've ever owned your own business, been an entrepreneur or wondered what it's like doing so, this is as close to reality as it gets.



The IRS suspected a fishing boat owner wasn't paying proper wages to his Deckhand and sent an agent to investigate him.

IRS AUDITOR: "I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them."

Boat Owner: "Well, there's Clarence, my deckhand; he's been with me for 3 years. I pay him \$1,000 a week plus free room and board. Then there's the mentally challenged guy. He works about 18 hours every day and does about 90% of the work around here. He makes about \$10 per week, pays his own room and board, and I buy him a bottle of Bacardi rum and a dozen Budweisers every Saturday night so he can cope with life. He also gets to sleep with my wife occasionally".

IRS AUDITOR: "That's the guy I want to talk to - the mentally challenged one."

Boat Owner: "That would be me. What would you like to know?"

This piece submitted by our Chief Master at Arms, Don Tanner

USS Laffey (DD724)

Commander Frederick Julian Becton, captain of the destroyer USS Laffey (DD 724), took the radio message his communications officer handed him on April 12, 1945, but the concerned look on the young officer's face made Becton suspect that it was not good news. Laffey, an Allen M. Sumnerclass destroyer, had been screening the heavy fleet units that were bombarding Okinawa in close support of the ground forces ashore. She was the second U.S. destroyer to bear the name Laffey; the first ship had been lost off Guadalcanal in 1942.

The message told Commander Becton to detach his ship from the screening force and proceed at once to the huge naval anchorage at Kerama Retto, where he was to go alongside the destroyer Cassin Young and take aboard her fighter-director team. That could mean only one thing: Laffey had drawn duty on the radar picket line—the most dangerous, deadly and unwanted assignment in the Okinawa campaign as far as Navy personnel were concerned.

Shortly after dawn on April 13, Becton brought his ship into the crowded harbor at Kerama Retto. Many of the ships anchored there had been battered by kamikazes while on radar picket duty. Although Laffey's crew had encountered suicide bombers at Leyte, Mindoro, Luzon and Iwo Jima, they had never before seen so many damaged ships in one place. The crewmen began to imagine what might happen to them when they went out to their assigned picket station. Morale was low, and it only got worse when they

received news that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died the day before.

As soon as Laffey tied up alongside Cassin Young, the fighter-director team of two officers and three enlisted men reported aboard, carrying with them special electronic gear. Three hundred rounds of 5-inch ammunition were also loaded aboard so that Laffey would sail with full magazines of all calibers. As Laffey prepared to depart, the skipper of Cassin Young offered some advice to Becton: 'Keep moving and keep shooting. Steam as fast as you can and shoot as fast as you can.'

A gun captain from the destroyer Purdy, which was anchored nearby, also offered his thoughts about picket duty. Purdy had been struck by a kamikaze on April 12, killing 13 and wounding 270. He told the Laffey crewmen: 'You guys have a fighting chance, but they'll keep on coming till they get you. You'll knock a lot of them down, and you'll think you're doing fine. But in the end there'll be this one bastard with your name on his ticket.' After all the horrific stories the crew had heard while in the anchorage, they were almost relieved when Laffey steamed north toward her assigned area, radar picket station No. 1.

On April 14, Laffey, accompanied by LCS 51 (landing craft, support) and LCS 116, arrived on station 51 miles north of Point Bolo on south-central Okinawa, which was used as a reference point in aligning the 16 picket sectors. Laffey relieved the destroyer-minelayer J. William Ditter (DM 31), whose skipper informed Becton by radio that

during his time on station no kamikazes had entered the area, nor had any been detected by radar.

Becton hoped his ship would be as lucky, but at the same time he felt he should speak to his crew about the battle that was bound to come. He pressed the microphone button, and throughout the ship boomed the familiar words, 'This is the captain speaking.' Becton warned his crew not to expect the same kind of luck Ditter had had. He told them that he expected to see plenty of Japanese but that he had confidence in the crew's ability. They had tangled with the enemy before and won. They were now going to make the Japanese wish they had never heard of USS Laffey. In conclusion, Becton said: 'We're going to outmaneuver and outshoot them. They are going to go down, but we aren't.'

A short while later three bogeys appeared on the radar scope, but Laffey had no Combat Air Patrol (CAP) planes with her. Fifty miles to the east, however, there was a group of CAP planes with the destroyer Bryant (DD 665) on picket station No. 3. Becton requested their assistance, and the fighter-director team sent them toward the Japanese. All enemy planes were shot down. Not long after that, the radar operator reported eight more enemy aircraft approaching, and again Becton requested Bryant's CAP planes. The fighter-director team vectored them in, and they destroyed all the aircraft. By the end of Laffey's first day on picket duty, 11 planes had been shot down, but Laffey's gunners had not yet fired a shot. No enemy action occurred the next day, Sunday, April 15. The crew's

routine was broken only when Laffey was ordered to steam a few miles east to investigate a patrol plane's report that a downed Japanese aircraft was in the water. The plane was found with its dead pilot still strapped in the cockpit. Laffey's crew recovered an aircraft code book and other miscellaneous items that they would turn over to the intelligence section ashore, then sank the plane.

Monday morning began quietly on radar picket station No. 1. The whole crew was able to eat breakfast without any interruptions from the enemy. Then, at 8:25 a.m., the radar operator reported a solid cluster of pips too numerous to count approaching at 17,000 yards. It was a group of 165 kamikazes and 150 other enemy aircraft coming in fast from the north. The fighter-director team's two officers requested more help from CAP. They were informed that fighters would be sent to intercept the huge onrushing formation, but it would take time for the CAP planes to arrive in the area. Meanwhile, Laffey and her two support craft would have to deal with the enemy on their own.

At 8:30, four Aichi D3A 'Val' dive bombers broke off from the oncoming group and headed for Laffey, which was steaming along at flank speed. Two came in from the bow and two from the stern in a coordinated attack. Becton ordered hard left rudder, bringing the destroyer broadside to the planes, and the two forward 5-inch guns downed two of the Vals at about 3,000 yards. The stern 5-inch gun shot down the third kamikaze, and the 20mm and 40mm mounts downed the fourth with an assist from the gunners on LCS 51.

There was no time to rejoice over that success, however, because two more attackers, Yokosuka D4Y 'Judy' dive bombers, were coming in fast—one from the starboard beam and one from the port beam. When the Judy on the starboard side got within range of the 20mm and 40mm guns, it was torn apart by converging fire and crashed into the sea. The gunners' attention then shifted to port to assist with the second Judy, as it came in bobbing and weaving. The Japanese pilot strafed the ship, peppering the superstructure and wounding several men. The 20mm and 40mm guns finally downed the plane about 50 yards out, but just before hitting the water, the pilot released a bomb that sent shrapnel flying everywhere, wounding several more men and knocking others off their feet. The explosion also knocked out the SG radar, which was needed to detect low-flying aircraft.

The next attacker, another Val, came streaking in on the port beam. All three 5-inch guns opened fire, and as the plane came closer, the 20mm and 40mm mounts joined in. It looked as if the pilot was aiming to slam into the aft 5-inch gun, but he came in just a bit high and only grazed the top of it before smashing into the sea off the starboard side, killing one man in the gun crew. The eighth attacker, a Judy, came skimming in low over the water on the starboard beam. The 20mm and 40mm guns were hitting the plane, and finally, after a hit in the gas tank, the Judy burst into a fireball and crashed into the sea. Laffey's crewmen felt as if they had been battling the enemy for hours, but it was only 8:42, just 12 minutes since the attacks had started.

There was a respite of about three minutes before the next attacker, another Val, came boring in off the port bow. The portside guns raked the plane, which shuddered and twisted but kept coming, even as gasoline poured from one wing tank. The pilot cleared the portside 20mm and 40mm mounts and crashed into the 20mm mounts amidships, killing three gunners before sliding into the sea. Flaming gasoline was everywhere, and black smoke engulfed the area. Two 40mm mounts were wrecked and out of operation, as were two 20mm mounts.

The ammunition racks around the gun tubs were filled with clips of shells, which were in danger of exploding due to the heat. Damage-control crewmen began to heave the clips over the side of the ship. Some of them were so hot that the men had to protect their hands with rags. As some of the ammunition exploded and blew holes in the deck, flaming gasoline poured into a magazine below. Fortunately, the ammo was packed in metal cans that resisted the heat until a damage-control party arrived and hosed down the containers, thereby avoiding disaster.

Communications were knocked out in the forward engine room, but that did not present a problem for the moment. The engineers decided to adjust the ship's speed according to the sound of the gunfire they heard. If it was loud and fast, they would increase the speed. A more immediate problem was the smoke and fumes being sucked into the engine rooms by the ventilators. Machinist's Mate John Michel, in the aft engine room, shut down the supply fans. The temperature soon

reached 130 degrees and kept climbing as Michel worked his way through the dense smoke, located the controls for the exhaust fans and turned them on. The smoke began to clear and the temperature began to fall. Knowing that the smoke would undoubtedly attract more kamikazes, Becton reduced the ship's speed to avoid fanning the flames.

Just as the crew was beginning to get the situation under control, two more kamikazes, both Vals, struck. One came in from astern low and fast, just a few feet above the water. The gunners of the three after 20mm mounts hit him with accurate fire, and parts of the plane broke off, but the pilot kept boring in. He plowed through the three mounts, killing the gun crews, and rammed into a 5-inch gun. The bomb he was carrying exploded, causing the plane to disintegrate and throwing gun captain Larry Delewski clear of danger. Fortunately, he was unhurt. Another man was blown overboard, but he was picked up by LCS 51, along with another crewman who had gone overboard earlier.

Flaming gasoline covered Laffey's fantail and aft gun mount, sending more black smoke billowing into the air. The fires threatened a magazine below the mount, so firefighters flooded it, preventing an explosion that could have torn the ship apart. The situation was about to get worse, however, because the 11th kamikaze came crashing aboard at almost the same spot. That plane's bomb wiped out the mount's gun crew and wounded several others. The damage-control parties had no time to take a breather.

About two minutes later, another Val came gliding in from astern, probably because the guns were out of commission there. The pilot dropped his bomb and sped away. The bomb detonated on the stern just above Laffey's propeller, severing the electrical cables and hydraulic lines that controlled the ship's rudder mechanism. The rudder jammed at 26 degrees left, and the ship began to steam in a circle, still able to maintain speed but without control. Although crewmen began to work on it at once, their efforts were fruitless. The rudder was jammed tight and could not be moved.

The smoke and flames must have indicated to the attackers that Laffey was nearly done for, but they did not ease off. Two more planes came roaring in from the port quarter, and every gun that could be brought to bear on the attackers poured out a steady stream of flak, but to no avail. The first plane slammed into the aft deckhouse, exploding in a ball of fire. Seconds later, the other plane crashed into the ship in almost the same spot. Gasoline from both planes produced roaring fires that covered the whole aft part of the ship.

Machinist's Mates George Logan and Stephen Waite, who had been battling fires in the aft living spaces, became trapped when the escape hatches buckled. They went to the emergency diesel generator room and secured the watertight door behind them. There was no light or ventilation and no way out, but there was a telephone that still worked, and they got through to the aft engine room. John Michel went to work again, this time with some help from Machinist's Mate Buford

Thompson. They chiseled a hole through the bulkhead and passed an air hose in to the trapped men. Meanwhile, Machinist's Mates Art Hogan and Elton Peeler used cutting torches to make a hole in the deck and then pulled Logan and Waite to safety.

At the same time, a Nakajima Ki-43 'Oscar' was streaking in from the port bow with a CAP Vought F4U Corsair on its tail. The port side 20mm and 40mm mounts were sending up a steady barrage while trying not to hit the Corsair. This Japanese pilot did not drop down and ram the bridge but zoomed up and over it, shearing off the port yardarm on Laffey's mast, which came crashing down to the deck, taking the American flag with it. As the Corsair zoomed by, it hit the air-search radar antenna and knocked it to the deck below. After he cleared Laffey, the Japanese pilot lost altitude quickly and crashed into the sea, while the Corsair pilot managed to pull up and bail out before his plane hit the water farther away. Signalman Tom McCarthy saw Laffey's colors fall to the deck and wasted no time in remedying the situation. He grabbed a new flag from the flag locker, shinned up the mast and attached the new colors with a piece of line.

As he watched the Corsair chase the last attacker, Becton realized that his CAP planes, which had been spread thinly and even lured out of position at times, were now beginning to furnish some close support. That did not mean that Laffey was out of trouble, however. As if to prove the point, another Judy came in fast on the port beam, with a Corsair hot on its tail. The portside 20mm and 40mm mounts and the Corsair were

hitting the Judy, which splashed into the water about 50 yards away from Laffey. Shrapnel from the Judy's bomb severed all communications to Laffey's two remaining 5-inch guns, as well as wounded the crews who were still working the hot 20mm and 40mm guns. Three gunner's mates were also wounded.

Ensign Jim Townsley quickly jury-rigged a substitute system for communicating with the gun mounts. With a microphone strapped around his neck and plugged into the ship's loudspeaker system, he climbed atop the pilothouse, from where he could see the onrushing attackers, and directed the gunfire from there. The 17th attacker was eliminated as he bore in from the starboard side. The plane took a direct hit from a manually trained 5-inch gun, with an assist from the 20mm and 40mm mounts.

Two more kamikazes, both Oscars, came streaking in, one from the starboard beam and one from the starboard bow. The attacker on the starboard beam was hit with a 5-inch round head-on in the propeller and engine and blew apart. Mount captain Warren Walker shouted: 'We got the SOB! What a beautiful sight!' Meanwhile, another gun had the other attacker in its sights as the plane came diving in. Even though the electrical controls were out and the gun was being operated manually, it took only two rounds to finish off the attacker. As the plane exploded, the gun's trainer, Andy Stash, yelled excitedly: 'We got him! We got him! Did you see that bastard explode?'

In the brief lull that followed, assistant communications officer Lieutenant Frank Manson arrived on

the bridge to report to the skipper. When Mason finished talking, he hesitated a bit and then added: 'Captain, we're in pretty bad shape aft. Do you think we'll have to abandon ship?' Becton quickly replied: 'Hell no, Frank. We still have guns that can shoot. I'll never abandon ship as long as a gun will fire.' Relieved, the lieutenant went back to his duties.

The battle was not over yet. The 20th attacker, another Val, came gliding in from dead astern. Both the sun and the thick smoke helped to conceal the plane from the gunners. The pilot dropped his bomb, blasting an 8-by-10-foot hole in the already battered fantail. As he passed low over the length of the ship, he clipped off the starboard yardarm. He didn't get far; a Corsair seemed to come out of nowhere to shoot him down several hundred yards off the starboard bow. Shrapnel from the bomb hit the emergency sick bay that the ship's medical officer, Lieutenant Matt Darnell, had set up topside. Fragments severed the tips of two of the doctor's fingers. Bandaging the bloody stumps, he calmly asked the astonished pharmacist's mate who was assisting him, 'Who's next?'

The 21st attacker, another Val, strafed the ship as it came in off the starboard bow, aiming straight for the bridge. Seaman Feline Salcido, the bridge lookout, did not think that the captain saw the plane coming. He put his hand on the back of Becton's neck and shouted, 'Down, captain, down!' As they both crouched low, a violent explosion rocked the bridge. The plane had dropped a bomb, killing one 20mm gun crew and wounding members of another nearby crew. That Val did

not get away either; a Corsair pounced on him and finished him off.

The last plane was a Judy, which strafed Laffey as it came in from the port side. Although the port 20mm and 40mm guns put out a steady stream of fire, the attacker kept getting closer. Just when it seemed that the gunners were goners, a Corsair came roaring in with all guns blazing and blew up the Judy in midair.

By the end of the 22nd attack, the situation aboard Laffey was critical. The fires still raged, the stern was down due to flooded aft compartments, many guns no longer functioned and the rudder was still jammed at 26 degrees. Amid all the confusion and noise, Becton heard what sounded like many planes diving at once. Laffey could not absorb any more punishment. Sonarman Charlie Bell, Becton's telephone talker, provided him with the encouraging news he so desperately needed. 'Captain, look what's up there,' he said, pointing skyward. The weary skipper looked up to see 24 CAP Marine Corsairs and Navy Grumman F6F Hellcats just arriving to lend a hand to the few planes already on station. The Japanese had had enough and were hightailing it out of the area with the CAP planes in hot pursuit.

Laffey's crewmen could not contain their jubilation. Shouts of 'Get the bastards! Rip 'em up! Nail 'em!' rose above the din of the receding battle. It was finally over, and the grim toll was staggering: 80 minutes of continuous air attack, 22 separate attacks, six kamikazes crashed into the ship and four bomb hits. But Laffey's gunners had shot down

nine attackers. The ship's casualties totaled 32 dead and 71 wounded. Amazingly, eight guns were still able to fire. LCS 51 came alongside to help fight the fires, but the little vessel had also been hit and could only offer limited help.

The destroyer-minesweeper Macomb took Laffey in tow and headed for the Kerama Retto anchorage shortly after noon. The tugs Pakana (ATF 108) and Tawakoni (ATF 114) were dispatched to bring in Laffey. Using pumps, they got the flooding under control aboard the badly damaged ship. The jammed rudder caused towing problems, but it was still possible to maintain a forward speed of 4 knots.

At 6:14 the following morning, April 17, Laffey entered the harbor at Kerama Retto. Men gazed in amazement at the battered newcomer. It just did not seem possible that a ship could have taken so much punishment and survived; one kamikaze hit was often enough to sink a ship. Laffey's escorts on radar picket station No. 1 had also suffered during the agonizing ordeal. LCS 51 had a 7-foot hole in her port side amidships, and three of her sailors had been wounded. LCS 116 had suffered topside damage, along with 17 dead and 12 wounded.

Shortly after sunrise, when Laffey was safely at anchor, the crew went aboard the tug Tawakoni for breakfast, their first real meal in almost 24 hours. Later that morning, a chaplain came aboard to conduct services for those killed or missing in action.

By April 22, six days after her ordeal on the picket line, Laffey had

undergone enough repairs to depart for Saipan. At Saipan more repair work was performed, especially on the battered fantail. Laffey's next stop was Pearl Harbor, where the crew was warmly welcomed and entertained while the ship underwent further patching to ensure its safe passage back to the West Coast.

On Friday, May 25, 1945, Laffey moored at Pier 48 in Seattle, Wash.—39 days after her fight for survival on radar picket station No. 1. Before additional repairs were begun, the battered ship was thrown open for viewing by the public.

Some naval officials believed that defense workers had been easing off in their production efforts since V-E Day on May 8, and they had been searching for a way to remind everyone that the war was far from over. After seeing Laffey's condition, everyone got the message loud and clear.

For her outstanding performance on the picket line, Laffey was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Eighteen members of her crew received Bronze Stars, six received Silver Stars, two received Navy Crosses and one received the Navy Commendation Medal.

This article was written by Dale P. Harper and originally appeared in the March 1998 issue of World War II magazine. For more great articles subscribe to [World War II](#) magazine today!

Editor's Note: After reading "Hell From the Heavens, I decided to find articles that gave a brief description of the actions LAFFEY DD724 had been involved. I found the

LAFFEY website and contacted the members by email. I have inserted my email and surprising response from a member of the crew who served during WWII. Mr Phoutrides later became an officer.

Good morning, Ed

Tx for your comments and for your service to our country. More important, is the fact they came from a destroyerman serving on the same class as the Laffey.

We had a good crew and were fortunate to have survived the many actions we encountered.

Those who have served on destroyers, will always have a special place in my heart.

Ari Phoutrides, Former QM1c Plankowner and survivor of RP#1, Okinawa

From: Edward Lynch <lynchec@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2017 6:55 AM

To: webmaster@laffey.org

Subject: Guest Comment

Just finished reading "Hell From the Heavens" detailing what the LAFFEY crew experienced from Boston 1944 to Picket Station 1 off Okinawa.

I am a destroyer veteran myself and I have the utmost regard for the heroism displayed by that crew.

*Best regards,
Ed Lynch
USS BRISTOL DD857 Veterans Association*

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Peter



Tony and



Sam Dalfanzo

another

Sam Dalfanzo and his two twin brothers, Peter and Tony served in the same two ships: BRISTOL with one and PLYMOUTH ROCK with one. When Sam left BRISTOL his brother took his place. Following photos of high line evolution with another destroyer.



High line operation with destroyer. Photos courtesy of Sam.



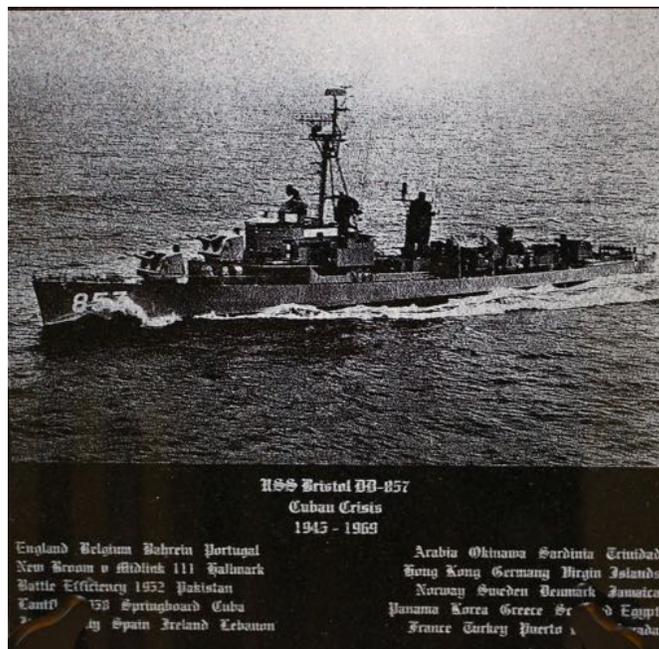


Cheesecake dessert at banquet.
Yes, I did eat it.



Walter Marczak, BTM, USN (RET) led the assembly in our Memorial Service

Bob Maenhout donated two of these beautiful granite depiction of USS BRISTOL DD857 and the countries to which BRISTOL visited.



**2017 Bristol Reunion Raffle
Table Donations**

Robert T Maenhout
2 Granite Bristol Plaques

Mary Riddle
Wine, Nuts, Small Boats

Tony & Maureen Molnar
DD857 Hand Drawn
Picture by Maureen's Son
Bristol License Plate,
Bicentennial Coin

Ed & Anne Lynch
Applebees & Olive Garden
\$25 Certificates
4 Books

Len Hodgins
Chivas Regal Scotch
Placemat-Napkin Set
Clive Cuscler Books

John & Gloria Edlin
Flag, Necklace, Navy Book,
Stationary
Knot Picture, Jewelry,
Candles

Walter Marczak
Lone Sailor Bronze Statue
& Scotland Book

Marty Walsh
Destroyer "T" Shirt

Sam Delfonzo
Purse, Earrings, Necklace
Don Singer \$40 Visa Card

Paul & Joyce Kallfelz 2
Pamela Cassidy Towels,
Fall Flower Plant
\$25 DD Gift Card, 2
American Flags

Terry & Ruth Hillestad
2-12 Pack Wisconsin
Sampler Beer

Bernie O'Connor
Apple Pie Moonshine &
Bourbon Cream

Duane Haugan Old
Ironsides Picture

Paul Ratcliffe \$25
DD Coupon, Film Favorites
DVD

Dave Nixon \$30
Panera Gift Card

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USS BRISTOL
VETERANS
ASSOCIATION
BUSINESS MEETING
ATTENDEES

Scam Alert

“A recent rise in data breaches involving email marketing providers has resulted in a large volume of names and email addresses being accessed by fraudsters. This type of data breach opens the door to a specific type of convincing email scam called ‘spear phishing,’ where the sender can identify you by name and send an email that appears to be from a company that you deal with. The goal is to get you to open the email and provide the fraudsters with your personal information.”

A telephone version of the spear phishing scam surfaced in West Virginia in 2010. The West Virginia Office of Technology issued a scam alert that warned fraudsters had posed as Visa and MasterCard representatives and asked cardholders for their three-digit security code in order to investigate a fraudulent purchase.

That scam alert is the exact same text that appears in the chain email that is marking the rounds on the web.

If a fraudster already has a victim’s credit card number but not the three-digit security code on the back of the card, they will be unable to use the card to make online purchases. That’s why cardholders should never give up their security code over the phone, according to Visa:

“The three-digit security code shown on the back of your Visa card lets merchants know that you’re physically holding the card when you make a purchase online or over the phone. It’s yet another layer of protection Visa implements to prevent fraud before it happens.”

Credit card companies say that consumers should never reveal personal information over the phone. Cardholders should hang up and call the 800-number on the back of their credit card if they receive a suspicious phone call from the company. A real example of the

eRumor as it has appeared on the Internet:

This is a heads up for everyone regarding the latest in credit card fraud.

Royal Bank received this communication about the newest scam. This one is pretty slick, since they provide YOU with all the information, except the one piece they want.

Note, the callers do not ask for your card number; they already have it. This information is worth reading. By understanding how the VISA & MasterCard telephone Credit Card Scam works, you’ll be better prepared to protect yourself.

One of our employees was called on Wednesday from ‘VISA’, and I was called on Thursday from ‘MasterCard’. The scam works like this:

Person calling says – ‘This is (name) and I’m calling from the Security and Fraud Department at VISA.

My Badge number is 12460, your card has been flagged for an unusual purchase pattern, and I’m calling to verify.

This would be on your VISA card which was issued by (name of bank). Did you purchase an Anti-Telemarketing Device for \$497.99 from a marketing company based in Arizona?’

When you say ‘No’, the caller continues with, ‘Then we will be issuing a credit to your account. This is a company we have been watching, and the charges range from \$297 to \$497, just under the \$500 purchase pattern that flags most cards. Before your next statement, the credit will be sent to (gives you your address). Is that correct?’

You say ‘yes’. The caller continues – ‘I will be starting a Fraud Investigation. If you have any questions, you should call the 1- 800 number listed on the back of your card (1-800-VISA) and ask for Security. You will need to refer to this Control Number.’

The caller then gives you a 6 digit number. ‘Do you need me to read it again?’

Here’s the IMPORTANT part on how the scam works

The caller then says, ‘I need to verify you are in possession of your card’. He’ll ask you to ‘turn your card over and look for some numbers’. There are 7 numbers; the first 4 are part of your card number, the last 3 are the Security Numbers that verify you are the possessor of the card. These are the numbers you sometimes use to make Internet purchases to prove you have the card.

The caller will ask you to read the last 3 numbers to him.

After you tell the caller the 3 numbers, he’ll say, ‘That is correct, I just needed to verify that the card has not been lost or stolen, and that you still have your card. Do you have any other questions?’

After you say no, the caller then thanks you and states, ‘Don’t hesitate to call back if you do’, and hangs up.

You actually say very little, and they never ask for or tell you the card number. But after we were called on Wednesday, we called back within 20 minutes to ask a question. We were glad we did!

The REAL VISA Security Department told us it was a scam and in the last 15 minutes a new purchase of \$497.99 was charged to our card. We made a real fraud report and closed the VISA account. VISA is reissuing us a new number. What the Scammer wants is the 3-digit PIN number on the back of the card. Don’t give it to them. Instead, tell them you’ll call VISA or MasterCard directly for verification of their conversation.

The real VISA told us that they will never ask for anything on the card, as they already know the information, since they issued the card.

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