

# @ Wing and a Prayer

1 3 T H C O M B A T W I N G

Spring/Summer  
Newsletter  
13th Combat Wing  
Editor:  
Cindy Goodman

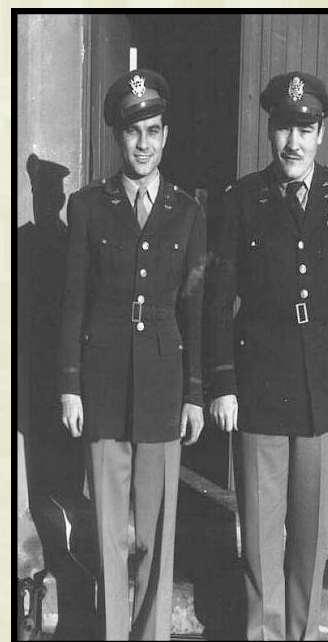
THOSE WHO  
CONTRIBUTED  
TO THIS  
NEWSLETTER.

- Michael Faley
- Janie McKnight
- Thomas Drugan
- Jan Riddling

## NEW 13TH CBW PHOTO SECTION



Brig. General Huglin and his Staff



Maj. J. T. Griffin & Maj. Joe  
Arminini, 13th CBW

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Air Sea Rescue           | 2  |
| Safe Landing Loads       | 3  |
| 390th BG                 | 4  |
| 100th BG Dixie's Delight | 5  |
| 95th BG                  | 10 |

Visit the new section at:

[http://www.100thbg.com/13thcbw/13thcbw\\_photos.htm](http://www.100thbg.com/13thcbw/13thcbw_photos.htm)

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

This newsletter cannot exist without your input.  
Please send submissions to  
Cindy Goodman: [goodman.cindy@gmail.com](mailto:goodman.cindy@gmail.com)  
Or Michael Faley: [mpfaley@aol.com](mailto:mpfaley@aol.com)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-A-L

55

-25

HEADQUARTERS

1

Page

13TH COMBAT BOMB WING (H)

Page

1

APO 634

E-

A-2

13 CBW INSTURCTIONS )  
1944

24 February

: OPERATIONS  
NUMBER 55-25 )**A I R / S E A R E S C U E**

1. Groups will assign as least two Wing a/c to carry "D" Channel crystals for air/sea rescue work on missions. These a/c will also be equipped with Gee boxes.

2. On returning for a mission, if an a/c is seen ditching or already in the water, the Group leader will be notified on Channel "A" immediately. The Group leader will use his judgment as to whether it is safe to send down an a/c to aid in rescue. If he considers it safe, he will send down an a/c equipped with a "D" Channel crystal.

3. The rescue a/c will circle the ditched a/c at 4,000 feet. Emergency IFF will be turned on until the rescue a/c leaves the ditched a/c. Gee fix will be taken and called in tofighter Command on Channel "D".

4. The radio operator will call the assigned MF/DF section on trailing wire. He will send SOS procedure plus "Another B-17 ditched" in the clear and continue transmitting until a receipt is received.

5. The rescue a/c will circle ditched a/c only as long as pilot considers it safe to do so.

By order of Colonel HUGLIN:

M. F. STALDER  
Lt. Col., Air Corps  
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

*William W Veal* W. W. VEAL  
Lt. Col., Air Corps,

DISTRIBUTION: "A"

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-A-L

HEADQUARTERS  
13TH COMBAT BOMB WING (H)  
APO 559

55-9  
1 Page  
Page

1

13 CBW INSTURCTIONS)

24 July

1944

NUMBER :  
55-9)

## OPERATIONS

## Safe Landing Loads for B-17 A/C

1. B-17 a/c may be landed safely in a three point position with a gross load of 63,000 lbs., and on twowheels with a gross load of 55,000 lbs.

2. It is recommended that in the event of a cancellation of a combat mission after take off, that a group practice mission be flown for approximately three hours in lieu of disposing of bomb loads.

By order of Colonel WITTAN:

W. W. Veal,  
Lt. Col., W.C.,  
Chief of Staff.

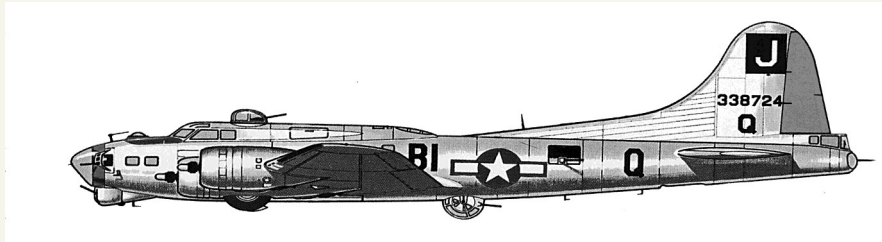
OFFICIAL:

JOSEPH A. MOLLER,  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
A.C. of S., A-3

DISTRIBUTION: "A"



## *The 390th Memorial Museum*



*It is June 6, 1944 ... D-Day*, and the 390th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, is in the air together with 12,000 other allied aircraft. They fly in support of the courageous troops hitting the Normandy beachhead. The 390th will fly three separate missions that day and drop 399,000 pounds of bombs on Nazi defensive positions.

For nearly two years the men of the 390th Bomb Group flew into combat against the formidable Nazi war machine. In spite of their terrible losses and the obvious extreme danger they faced, they returned to man their aircraft to fly again and again. More than 300 missions in all. It was during these heroic days that the men of the 390th Bomb Group established their *"legacy of courage"* which we honor and remember today. This is the story that we document at the 390th Memorial Museum. It is the story we tell to the hundreds of people who visit our museum every day.

Under the leadership and financial support of former Group Commander Colonel Joe Moller, veterans of World War II built this memorial museum. For more than twenty-five years, we have explained to old and new generations the real history of the war and the truth about the men who sacrificed their youth and often their lives so that our freedoms could endure.



In recognition of attaining the Silver Anniversary milestone of our historic founding, we have established a **"Friends of the Fortress"** program. The purpose of this program is to generate public support from any and all who agree with our purpose and would like to participate in our cause.

This is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. We depend on public support to maintain the fully restored B17G on display in the museum and to fund the ongoing research and educational programs which are the hallmark of our mission. It is important work that we do and we welcome new members and donors. In order to participate or

to learn more about the 390th Memorial Museum and its programs, please visit our web site at <http://www.390th.org>.

**The 390th Memorial Museum Foundation**  
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**Phone: (520) 574-0287 FAX: (520) 574-3030**  
**E-mail: [director@390th.org](mailto:director@390th.org)**

# 100th Bomb Group

## TOUCHING HISTORY: THE CHRONICLE OF DIXIE'S DELIGHT PART ONE: THE MISSION

The Mighty Eighth had heavy casualties in the 22 months of air war: 43,373 young airmen lost their lives, 18,000 were wounded, and 26,000 young fliers became Prisoners of War. This is the story of one crew.

"I thoroughly enjoyed being associated with my crew," wrote Tom Ramsey. "We had some great times together in El Paso and other stops before and during our flight overseas. We were all very much individuals coming from different areas of the United States. Dick Chapple and Ross Purdy were from Michigan. Wally Oldham and Howard Leach were from California. Carl Dunn was from West Virginia, Bill Charlton from Pennsylvania, Pat Tooley from Louisiana, Ralph Kalberloh from Missouri, and I was from Indiana. As a bomber crew, we were an informal lot and generally dismissed the military matter of rank."

It was 3:30 AM, February 3, 1945, when an orderly entered the barracks, turning on the overhead light and blowing his whistle. It was his thankless duty to awaken the crews scheduled to fly that day. The sleepy men could hear the distant sound of the big engines as the ground crews began pre-flighting the aircraft.

"We hurriedly dressed," said Howard Leach, "and made our way in the dim light to the mess hall for the 0400 breakfast. Flight crews were given fresh eggs in place of the usually powdered eggs." This was not a common practice at all bases. More than one veteran from other groups has said they rarely saw fresh eggs.

After breakfast Leach headed to the briefing building with Pilot Waldo Oldham, Co-Pilot Carl Dunn, and Navigator Ross Purdy to gather with the officers of 38 crews to fly that day. It would be a most dramatic day in their lives as the officers of Dixie's Delight nervously awaited the appearance of the Briefing Officers.

Bombardier Leach, remembers it this way: "A curtain was draped over one corner of the room, concealing the target for the day's mission. There was little talk. The veteran crews who had attended other such briefings were obviously nervous. For some it was to be their last mission, and then they would return to the states. All they needed was a "milk run" to bring them safely home. They remembered the December 31 Hamburg raid and missing 109 comrades. Our crew was too green to grasp the tension in that room.

"Someone yelled, 'Attention,' bringing us to our feet as Col. Jeffrey (Commanding Officer, Thomas S.) entered the room followed by other officers involved in the briefing, including Majors Crosby (Group Navigator, Harry H.) and Ventriess (Group Bombardier, Don). Without any hesitancy he announced, 'Gentlemen, the target is Berlin.' The curtain was drawn back, revealing the mission route. There was a voice in the back that said, 'Oh my god!'"



Operations Officer, Lt. Col. John Wallace then proceeded to spell out the details. The mission was to bomb the railhead in the center of Berlin near the Tempelhof Airdrome.

.The mission was a maximum effort...1003 heavy bombers with 10,000 men aboard, plus fighter squadrons for support. The 100th was selected to lead the 13th Combat Wing and 3rd Air Division. Major Robert Rosenthal led the 100th. The briefing officers stated that flak would be minimal over the target.

After breakfast the enlisted men had assembled at their aircraft to wait for the officers. The ground crews were already loading 50-caliber ammo, bombs, and readying the planes for takeoff.

After briefing the officers of Dixie's Delight made their way to the ready room, where they were issued their flying clothes and parachutes.

"We were trucked out to our aircraft," said Leach, "where we joined the enlisted men. Wally, Carl and Pat prepared the ship for takeoff while the rest of us assembled in the radio room. We proceeded to taxi onto the perimeter track, with takeoff starting at 0715. As our group formed over our field, we joined the other elements of the 13th Combat Wing, over the channel and were in a tight formation at 0955 when we approached the Continental coast at 14,000 feet climbing to 27,000 feet."

For six foot tall Tail Gunner Ralph J. Kalberloh, the only way to reach his position was to crawl on his hands and knees from the waist of the aircraft to the tail, where his twin 50 caliber machine guns were mounted. There was also an intercom outlet with head phones, an oxygen mask with hose attached to the oxygen system on the wall of the plane, and just enough room to squat on his knees and sit on a bicycle seat and maneuver the guns. "I could wear my parachute harness, but my chest-pack parachute could not be worn and lay beside me. It was a lonely spot from which to observe where we had been and to wonder what lay ahead of us."

As they formed up over the channel, Waist Gunner Ramsey radioed the cockpit and asked permission to test fire the guns. It was at this time that Chapple (Cpl. Richard G. Chapple) discovered that the ball turret ammo hatch had fallen off, causing belts of 50-caliber ammo to spill out and dangle in space."

"I told him to salvo the ammo," said Leach, "and remain in the ball to track any attacking aircraft."

Nearer the target, when they encountered heavy flak, Ramsey called for Charlton (Radio Operator William Charlton) to man the right waist position, which he had been assigned to do. Ramsey had observed some unidentified aircraft in the distance, but so far they had not approached the group. It was then that Ramsey noticed Charlton lying on the floor of the radio room just forward of the waist area. "I thought at first that he had been hit, so I called in the information."

"We were told at the briefing that there would be an 11 minute bomb run," said Howard Leach. "Purdy and I were in the nose and could clearly see the lead ships, other ships of the 100th and the flak once we turned onto the bomb run. I heard Ramsey on the intercom reporting to Wally that Charlton had been hit. I quickly clambered out of the nose to the flight deck and crawled back through the catwalk past the bomb bay to give what aid I could."

Leach crawled past the 10 armed 500 pound bombs ominously awaiting release. When he reached the radio room, he found Ramsey and Kalberloh there with the fallen man.

Radio Operator Charlton's oxygen mask was off and his goggles had been severed by flak. One lens was hanging on each side of his helmet. He was not wounded, as had been feared, but had passed out from lack of oxygen. His mask was reattached, and he quickly revived. Leach headed back to his position in the nose.

Flying through the intense flak, Pilot Oldham was encountering great difficulty in controlling the aircraft due to the prop wash created as the ships moved together into tight formation. There were a lot of pilot and crew exchanges over the interphones, and Dixie's Delight, along with many other aircraft, was suffering major damage.

From his position in the tail, Ralph Kalberloh watched the puffs of black smoke as the 88 and 105 anti-aircraft guns fired volleys of four shells at a time. "I would see the first puff and then count 2-3-4, and several times it looked like the third or fourth shell might explode between my legs. It was 11 minutes of terror for me."

Flak hit the ball turret. "It did not penetrate Chapple's back chute, but he felt it," said Kalberloh. Alarmed, the gunner exited the ball turret. Moments later it was wiped out by a flak burst.

As they approached the target and flak intensified, Howard Leach put on his flak suit and crouched behind his chair in the nose. "Purdy, who up to this time had ignored his flak suit, hit the panic button, and I had to assist him in getting it on."

It was then that an explosion rocked them. "I was horrified by a direct hit on Cotner's (Lt. Orville H. Cotner flying A/C 44-6500) ship above and to the left of us. It burst into a ball of flame with our passing right through the flaming debris."

From his position in the tail, Kalberloh could see the ball turret of the doomed ship floating towards the ground. After what seemed an eternity, a parachute appeared and he hoped that there was at least one survivor. Sadly, BTG Sgt. John C. Moss perished along with the rest of his crew.

"When the explosion occurred," said Ramsey, "I instinctively dropped down behind the armor plate that covered the area below the waist position. After we flew through the debris, I stood up and discovered that my ammo rack, positioned at eye level and to the right, had taken a direct flak hit. I would surely have been killed had I been standing at my station."

From the nose of the aircraft, Leach could see another ship spiraling down out of control. "It was Beck on his fifth mission (2nd Lt. Richard A. Beck piloting A/C 42-102958)." Leach focused on the lead ships awaiting the flare that would prompt him to release his bombs unaware that the lead ship, commanded by Major Rosenthal, was on fire and was to leave the formation upon dropping its bombs. "The flare and bombs of the lead ship appeared and I promptly hit the toggle switch releasing our bombs."

Pilot Waldo J. Oldham wrote: "My number three engine started trailing smoke and vibrating so badly it almost broke loose from the mounting. I shut it down and feathered the prop. Over the radio, we were informed that we were losing fuel or oil out of a hole in the right wing. I called Pat Tooley, the engineer, to come down from the upper turret and turn on the fuel transfer pump to try to save as much fuel as we could."

TTE Pat Tooley vacated his turret and made his way to where the transfer pump was positioned. That completed, he returned to his turret only to find half of it had been torn away. Amazingly, each man – Chapple, Ramsey and Tooley - had vacated his position at just the right time to avoid injury. “I am sure some super being was looking out for us,” said Tom Ramsey. “With all that was going on, we still managed to drop our bombs.”

Pilot Waldo Oldham put it this way: “It seemed miraculous that each man moved at just the right time to avoid being hit. Although we had a lot of bad luck, we were extremely fortunate to be shot up that bad and still no one was injured.”

Oldham’s account continues: “Our formation was pretty well scattered with the lead ship down, Cotner and Beck gone, and the deputy lead hadn’t moved into position yet. Also, with only three engines we were struggling to keep up. I believe that before the Group reformed on the deputy lead, we had gone several minutes past our RP turn and gotten into more flak areas, sustaining even more damage. Our number two engine quit, and I couldn’t get the prop to feather, so it was windmilling, causing a lot of drag. We dropped back and tried to tag onto other Group formations, but we couldn’t maintain speed or altitude.

“As we lost altitude, we followed the heading of the Bomber stream above, but weren’t too sure of our distance from the coast. There was a cloud deck below at about 12,000 feet, so the ground below wasn’t visible, but we reckoned we were near the coast, not far from Hamburg. We considered turning north and trying to make it across the Denmark line, but at that time there was a minor explosion in the number four engine nacelle, and flames appeared out the cowlings.”

“We were trailing behind,” continues Leach, “unable to keep up with the other ships grouping to return to England. I looked below and could see the Russian tanks and troops besieging Berlin. Purdy was at a loss for a heading and Wally was struggling with the engines. I suggested we head for the Russian lines, but could not get any response from the navigator. Unable to rejoin the formation, we were alone and losing altitude. The right inboard engine caught fire and was put out.”

It was somewhat ironic” wrote Waldo Oldham, “that when we were over Berlin we only had one engine out, so we thought we could possibly get back on three. We had been briefed to turn east if in trouble and try to get behind the Russian lines. That’s what Rosie and Ernst did, though their crew jumped sooner. However, our troubles were spread over the next 100 plus miles and approximately the next hour, so my decision to keep going may have been wrong.”

“The crew had been alerted for possible bail-out earlier, and now it was imminent. Not knowing for sure that we were still over land, I made a “U” turn and headed inland. We didn’t want to jump in the water, yet with the engine flaming, I was afraid to wait any longer to get the crew out.”

“When Wally called me on the intercom to tell me we were going to have to bail out,” said Ralph Kalberloh, “he added, ‘you can jump out back there or come to the waist where the others are jumping.’ My escape hatch was a very small rectangular opening in the tail floor. To bail out, I had to first jettison the door and then from a kneeling position do a somersault headfirst through the opening.

“As a boy, I could not even climb a tree because I was afraid of heights, so you can imagine how frightened I was of bailing out, especially alone. I imagined myself freezing in the hatch opening and with no one to push me out, I would go down with the plane. I asked Wally to give me time to get to the waist, which he did. I was in such a hurry that I grabbed my chute while crawling toward the waist. I am sure that I looked like a giant anteater as I came crawling out of the tail dragging a long piece of oxygen hose attached to my oxygen mask. I had failed to uncouple it!”

In the nose of the aircraft, Howard Leach heard Oldham inform the crew that they would have to bail out. “I proceeded to the nose hatch, kicking it out and prepared to jump. I realized that I did not have my shoes, so I returned to the nose to retrieve them, fastening them to my chute.

“Seated dangling my feet in space, I became aware that Carl (Co-Pilot Carl D. Dunn) was coming down. Once his feet appeared, I rolled out at 23,000 feet. Clear of the ship, I was falling in space unable to see the ground, insensitive to falling, and reluctant to pull the ripcord. There was no fear, and I found myself curiously assuming various positions – one completely stretched out, another locked into a ball.

“I became conscious of falling when I busted through the clouds and could see the ground rapidly approaching.”

Back in the waist of the aircraft the gunners were donning their parachutes. “It was my responsibility to jettison the waist door, which I promptly did,” said Tom Ramsey. “All of us except Wally, Carl, and Howard were in the waist when we bailed out.”

Ralph Kalberloh continues: “The waist door had been jettisoned, and Tom Ramsey was first in line to jump. I began talking to him while someone handed me a couple of boxes of K-rations, which I stuffed in the knee pockets of my flight pants. When the bell rang to jump, I was shaking hands with Ramsey. He turned and jumped and I crowded in line. I believe I was still shaking his hand when I followed him out of the door.

“The jump was not what I expected. There wasn’t any sensation of falling – it was more like a feather floating in the wind. My chute opened with a jolt, but I managed to hold onto my G.I. shoes, which were tied together by the shoe strings. Leach insisted we tie our shoes to the parachute harness to avoid having them jerked from our hands when the chute opened. However, I lost the K-rations, compass and escape map because I had failed to close the pockets of my flight suit. Two American fighter planes circled us as we floated down.

“As I floated down, every bad thing I had ever done in my life appeared in my thoughts and I wondered. Would I be machine gunned by German fighters, killed by an angry mob or land in a lake and drown from the collapsing chute? As I got closer to the ground, my mind immediately turned to survival.”

“While the first to leave the plane, I was probably the last to land because I had immediately pulled the ripcord,” said Tom Ramsey. “I remember spinning like a ball upon leaving the plane and the chute opening without a severe jerk. I never saw the plane, nor do I recall seeing any other chutes.”

In Part Two of the article, to be carried in the next issue. Follow the crew as each man must decide his future and what that future will become.

# *95th Bomb Group*

## ANNUAL MEMORIAL CEREMONY AT WRIGHT PATTERSON

In the midst of a triangular brick walkway in the Memorial Gardens at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, a deep red Thunderbird takes form to support a black granite pedestal holding an open bronze globe. Four plaques are attached to the sides of the pedestal, paying tribute to the men of the 95th and identifying important historical information, including the 95th's three unit citations.

The memorial was presented to the Museum on 17 September 1988, with the address being given by 95th Bomb Group Association President David T. McKnight. Seven years later, on 7 May 1995, the walkway surrounding the monument was dedicated. The red bricks in the Thunderbird represent those KIA, and the white walkway bricks are in memory of other 95th veterans. May 7th was chosen because it was on that day in 1945 that the 95th flew its last mission, a "chowhound" mission to feed the starving Dutch. Eleven crew members were lost when their plane was forced into the English Channel. The war in Europe was over the following day. Every year, on May 7th, a dedicated group gathers in Dayton to honor the heroes of the 95th. The 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation is particularly grateful to Megan and Kevin Brackney, who lovingly care for this memorial, and who do so much to make this annual event so meaningful.

The words below are those that were spoken when this memorial was dedicated in 1988. They serve as a reminder of the price that so many paid to make our world a better place.

### DEDICATION ADDRESS AT AIR FORCE MUSEUM MEMORIAL PARK BY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT DAVID T. MCKNIGHT, COL. USAF (RET'D) SEPTEMBER 17, 1988

My greetings and welcome to all as we gather here to dedicate our memorial monument as it takes its place with those of other distinguished units of WWII similarly honored here.

You will note from the other monuments that there are many combat aircraft represented, but we hold most dear the one that served the 95th so well, the B-17.

Those who flew her knew what a nearly indestructible and forgiving friend she was, and many of us here today owe our lives to that rugged friend!!

However the realities of warfare dictate that despite the competency of crews and the efficiency of weaponry, combat losses are inevitable.

Certainly the history of the 95th gives painful affirmation of that fact.

We had barely begun combat operations when we received a painful baptism in the form of a



ground accident that cost the lives of 19 men and caused severe injuries to 20 others.

It happened just 15 days after the ground echelon had landed and the ground crews were busily engaged in preparing the aircraft for a combat mission. Suddenly and without warning, the bomb load on one aircraft inexplicably exploded causing the injuries and loss of life I have just described.

In addition to our personnel losses, four aircraft were completely destroyed, and 11 others were put out of commission for a long period of time.

Seventeen days later our losses in a raid on Kiel cost us 10 aircraft out of 16 dispatched. A heartbreaking loss of 103 crewmen that could have completely shattered the character of a less determined group of men. The 95<sup>th</sup> survived and pressed on.

Those ordeals, rather than breaking the spirit of this proud Group, actually were important factors in transforming a body of well-trained but inexperienced young men into a resolute and determined fighting team!!!

It was a lesson that the members of the 95<sup>th</sup> never forgot – that every member of the 95<sup>th</sup> Group and every member of each of its support group was a vital part of the total fighting team. The cooks, the military police, the medics, the maintenance people – the list goes on – all were vital parts of the team, and we were not capable of functioning without each other.

All were equal partners in contributing to a successful victory over the most vicious war machine that ever threatened the free World.

From those early grievous events the Group proceeded to establish its reputation as one of the premier units of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

It is said that statistics are cold and boring except to those who experience them; but bear with me as I mention just a few of the numbers that are proudly reflected in our records:

- We flew 321 Combat Missions
- We lost 157 B-17's
- We destroyed 425 enemy aircraft

We were the only 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Bomb Group to receive three Presidential Distinguished Unit Citations.

The citations were for successful missions to Regensburg and Munster and that great blow to the morale of the Third Reich – to Berlin on 4 March 1944. This first daylight Bombing of Berlin was led by Grif Mumford, Al Brown, Hal Powers, Bill Owens and their outstanding crews.

One tragic statistic, however, is the loss of over 600 men killed in action, killed in service, or missing in action. A stark reminder that our contribution for peace was an expensive one indeed.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 13TH CBW

A more complete summary of the Group's statistics – including these – is etched on the bronze plaques which are attached to our monument to be seen and read by one-to-two million Air Force Museum visitors each year in the future, and I am sure by many of our families and friends in those years to come.

As we pay homage to those brave men who gave their lives in WWII, let us also salute the memories of our 95<sup>th</sup> comrades who have passed away in the years since that awesome undertaking.

Let us recognize and cherish, too, those whose love kept our families and homes together. As we fought to protect them, they also fought a lonely battle that in many ways was just as difficult as ours. This monument is dedicated to them, also.

As our ranks do grow thinner, we leave behind us here a lasting message as well as a monument. The message is that freedom is not maintained without vigilance and sacrifice. Our young men who made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom knew that, but fought the fight willingly and with full knowledge of the possible consequences.

May the monuments we see around us here today inspire future generations to show the same courage and fortitude to meet all challenges to the freedom of the United States of America and the free world.



***Big Joe  
Armanini  
at the 95th with  
the crew of  
“I Dood It”***

