

Subject: RE: A glimpse of our future

Date: Tue, 18 Jan 2000 20:08:09 -0500

From: "Myer, Jonathan"

To:

CC: "Mike Sloniker", Dave Ripley

Dean Gray, Del Belanger

Don Joyce, Don Lewis

Don Purser, Earl & Mary Baldwin

"Eller, Gene", Frank Reilly

Fred Thompson, Gary Roush

John Hargleroad, John Hubbs

kadams, Keith D Wysong

Ken Mayberry, Ken Powers

Kurt Schatz

Lewis Westfall, Lisa Vad

Mac Jones, Mark Byrd

Mel Canon

"Michael J. Wheeler"

"Michael W. Mason"

Mike & Mary Brown, Mike Maloy

Mike Melia, "Mike O'Leary"

Mike Palmer, Mike Williams

mike&kathy woods

MJPhillips

"Myer, Jonathan", Neal Varner

Pat Dougan, Paul Spangler

Randy Zahn, Rick Miller

Richard Rex, Robert Clewell

Robert Mason, Robert Witt

"Robinson, John", Rock Compton

Rod Barber, "Roger L. Amis"

Ron Turner, Roy Kauffman

Thomas Macdonald

Thomas Payne

Tom Marshall, "Walker A. Jones"

"Wm.Robert Stanley Sr."

"Dave Livingston (E-mail)"

"Misty-eyed"? I had to throw away a perfectly good tie because I knew I'd never get all the snot out.

My recommendation -- for us-all and our older vets, both: Start writing your stories down. Start gathering your thoughts and talk into a recorder. Collect the bits and pieces from letters or your computer files. Info technology has now given us all unprecedented opportunities to document our lives, if we wish to. Even if it's hard and doesn't "read right," or "sound right." Never mind that; you can edit it later, or have somebody else edit it. The main thing is: if you (and our older vets) don't do it, their unique experiences will either die with them, or be indifferently remembered

only via journalistic "interpretations" (read "lies") or by history (which usually focuses on "the big picture," but not "how the shit went down that day"). Even if they make a movie of your life, you will be played by some New Age glamor boy who does it all wrong because the director wanted a "greater truth" than the facts would support.

You don't have to make it a "big project," or remember your whole life -- just the more important or crucial parts, the special missions, the people who took part, who lived and who died and what happened that day. Do a few of these, separately, and the pieces will start to fit together. It'll start to come easier. Knowledge shared is knowledge gained. Nobody else can document his own life, so if you (or the WW II or Korea vets) don't do it, most of it will be lost -- or misunderstood, or ignored.

Mike Sloniker does it. He "connects the dots" -- not only for himself but for others, too. If Mike Brown hasn't yet documented how he got his ass shot off (literally) and lived to tell about, he'd better. Meanwhile, I haven't had the time to read all the stories I've already come across on a couple of your helo nets, so if I'm preaching to the choir, I apologize.

My "presence" on your list is probably because I have been looking for specific helo drivers (I was a FAC and am researching a fellow-FAC's KIA events; several of you have been helping), but I thank you for sharing the article with me. It speaks to us all.

Jonathan Myer
O-1 Bird Dog FAC
Cagey 82, Kontum Province (mostly)
Apr 66 - Feb 67

> -----
> From: Rob Glasier
> Reply To: [REDACTED]
> Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2000 4:39 PM
> To: [World's Greatest Helo Crews]
> Subject: A glimpse of our future
>
> I like to go to the library at lunchtime sometimes, and today was one of
> those times.
>
> While walking amongst the books, I saw a small bent-over old man, hobbling
>
> along with a cane, ear piece, and assorted other body appendages visible
> beneath his shirt.
>
> He had on a "World War II Veteran" baseball cap, so I asked him which
> branch he was in.
>
> "Army Air Force", was the reply. "Were you ever in the service?", he asked"
>
> "Yes, I was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam", I replied. "Where were you
> stationed?", I asked.
>
> "Europe."
>
> "What did you do?"
>
> He points to the tie-tac he was wearing, "Recognize this?" It was a B-24
> Liberator.

>
> "Sure, my Dad was in the Pacific. Who were with you with?"
>
> He pulls a business card out of his decrepit old wallet. It says:
>
> John F. Barnacle
> 450th "COTTONTAILS" Bomb Group, 15th A.F
> Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society
> Air Forces Gunners Association
> D.A.V - AM. LEG. - V.F.W.
>
> [REDACTED]
> [REDACTED]
> [REDACTED]
>
> I asked John, "So, what did you do?"
>
> He replied, "Ball Turret Gunner. I don't want to bore you, but, would you
>
> like to hear my story?"
>
> "I sure would."
>
> He then regaled me with his story, of how he enlisted in the Guard in '38,
>
> and got called to active duty in October. '40. He started out in B-25s as
>
> a waste gunner. He was still in the States, out drinking with a bunch of
> guys one night, and one of them got drunk and told him about this special
> unit that Col. Jimmy Doolittle was forming up down at Eglin.
>
> John bummed a flight down to Eglin. He reported to the operations Major,
> and told him wanted to volunteer for the special unit he heard about. The
>
> Major told him he had to wait for the Col. to come back. Later that
> afternoon Doolittle landed, in his own personal P-40 that he flew. John
> reported to Doolittle and told him that he wanted to join his outfit.
> Doolittle told him to get the Hell out his office. He already had more
> guys wanting to commit suicide than he needed. That's how John missed the
>
> Tokyo raid.
>
> So, John returned back to his base, only to get disciplined with 120 days
> of KP and guard duty for running off to Jimmy.
>
> He then volunteered to train as part of the first two Heavy Bomber crews
> for the 450th. He was the small guy, so he got the ball turret.
>
> John then told me; of the day -one of many days - in which he personally
> shot down 5 German fighters, a mixture of Me-109s and FW-190s; of how he
> was wounded three times; of the day his B-24 got shot down over
> Yugoslavia,
> and he spent 30 days in E&E with Tito's partisans before he was
> repatriated
> to the Allies; of how they refused to let him return to combat because of
> the rule that shot down and returned airman might reveal info about the
> resistance; of about how he went back to the States, and trained new
> crewmen for the B-29,; and how they refused to let him volunteer to be

> B-29
> crewman in the Pacific - they said he had had too much already. He then
> showed me his beat-up old "Caterpillar Club" card, that he received for
> having his life saved by a parachute in March 1944.
>
> He had a gleam in his eyes, and that faraway look that warriors get when
> remembering. I know the look.
>
> I was silent, a little dumbstruck.
>
> He then hooked his cane on his arm, and took my hand in both of his. He
> started shaking my hand vigorously, and with tears in his eyes said,
> "Thank
> you for listening to my story."
>
> I was getting a little misty eyed too. I thanked him profusely for
> sharing
> it
>
> This just happened with in the past hour. I wrote this as memorial to
> this
> great, and aged warrior. They are dying off fast.
>
> I also wrote it because I saw myself - all of us - a few years down the
> road, as old men, (I mean really old men) forgotten by everybody. I hope
> somebody wants to hear my story someday. I hope somebody will stop and
> care.
>
> I am a little misty eyed again.
>
> Rob Glasier
> Maddog 19
> Greyhound 19
> 240th AHC
> RVN
>
>
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