



COMPANY "E" NEWSLETTER



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ARAUJO TAKES HONOR FLIGHT

Paul Araujo recently went to Washington, D.C. on an Honor Flight for WWII veterans. Below is the story from the Omaha newspaper.

HONOR FLIGHT: THIRD TRIP IS A CROWDED ONE

Joseph Morton. Sep 17, 2008

Omaha World - Herald. Omaha, NE

Sep 17, 2008

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WASHINGTON -- As young bucks, they charged enemy positions, shot down attacking planes and traveled the globe serving their country. They landed at Normandy and liberated Europe. They wrested Iwo Jima from the Japanese

Now in their 80s or even 90s, American veterans of World War II find that their steps have slowed a bit, and they have a few more aches and pains. But they can still remember.

The third Heartland Honor Flight arrived Tuesday in Washington, bringing 246 veterans and dozens of volunteer assistants to visit the National Mall memorial that honors their service. Many walk with the help of canes or walkers. Some need wheelchairs. The flights have been organized by Bill Williams of Omaha and funded by private donations. They're intended to enable veterans to visit the National World War II Memorial before they are too frail

Tuesday's group needed two planes to accommodate everyone. One plane arrived late, so some of those on the trip had to curtail their itinerary somewhat, but the travelers visited as many of the memorials and monuments as they could. The early group met with members of the state's congressional delegation at the WWII Memorial and watched the Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team perform.

Former Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, a WWII veteran himself, tries to show up for every honor flight. He dropped by the memorial Tuesday, shaking hands and posing for photos. He said he thought Tuesday's group from Nebraska was the single largest to make the trip. Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman met the group. Heineman's father was a WWII Navy veteran who served on a destroyer in the Pacific theater. He died last year without seeing the memorial.

Heineman said his father was representative of many veterans from the war in that he didn't talk in great detail about his experiences. The vets didn't want to seem like they were bragging, Heineman said, but their attitude seems to have changed a little since the memorial opened. "The veterans are so grateful for what people are doing that they've begun to open up a little bit and share what they went through," he said.

Wyman Nemecek, 85, of Grand Island was a tail gunner on a B-24. There's another reason, he said, that the veterans are speaking up more now: They know they won't be around much longer. "We're passing on faster than you can shake a stick at," he said.

Many veterans are disappointed that world conflict continues, he said. "We thought it was the end of all wars, but it was just the beginning," he said. He said that if vets share their experiences in Washington, perhaps elected officials will pause before going to war.

"When you go to war, people get killed -- it's that simple," Nemecek said.

Along for Tuesday's trip was Cindy Slone, whose father, 91-year-old Donald Dragoo, died in July on the return leg of the second Heartland Honor Flight. Slone, who made the trip with him, said Tuesday that her father told her about a time when his gun wouldn't fire during combat. He thought his life was

over. After surviving the war, he felt the rest of his years were a bonus, she said. "He felt he had cheated death by 65 years," she said. She said it was fitting that he died among his fellow veterans. "He died with his comrades," Slone said.

Credit: WORLD-HERALD BUREAU



Paul Araujo Age: 83

Town: He grew up in Lexington, Neb., and retired in Omaha

Service: 383rd Regiment, 96th Division, 10th Army

In the war: He turned 19 on the troop ship en route to the South Pacific island of Saipan to prepare for the invasion of Okinawa, which began April 1, 1945. Awards he received include the Bronze Star with Valor device and Combat Infantry Badge. He also received two Purple Hearts, the first on May 15, 1945, and the second on May 19, 1945. He spent two to three months recovering from shrapnel wounds at Naval Fleet Hospital 115 in Guam and then another two months hospitalized in Hawaii.

In his words: "I was called up for pre-induction before graduating from Lexington High School. Now that I live in Omaha, every time I go by the Durham Western Heritage Museum it takes me back to that fateful day we loaded on the troop train on that very site to make the trip to Camp Wolters, Texas, for basic training to go to war. After basic training, I came home on leave and then left a short time later for Fort Lawton, Wash., for final preparations prior to shipping overseas. The train stopped in North Platte, Neb., at the canteen, and I discovered I had left with the keys to our family car. A hostess in the canteen was gracious enough to agree to make arrangements for getting my parents those keys they needed back in Lexington. Whoever you are that helped me, if you read this, the keys made it back, and thank you again." (by DeDra Robb)

ADDRESS CHANGE?

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SPRING GREETINGS



Happy Memorial Day to all of you. This time of every year we thank the veterans we have lost for their service to this country. This year is no different.

We thank Pat Araujo (Paul's daughter) for passing on these articles and photos to us. We hope this will inspire more of you to send us stories and information about each of you to include in our newsletters. We love to hear from each of you.

David and I have had a very busy spring. I would say that one of our highlights has been going to the World War II museum in New Orleans, LA. I was there for a work trip and David joined me there. They have a fantastic WWII museum and if you are ever in the area we encourage you to go and see it. It concentrates more on the Normandy invasion as the Higgins boats were built in Louisiana by Andrew Higgins (who I learned is originally from Columbus, NE). They do have a terrific Pacific exhibit as well. We could have spent all day looking around there.

The photo included here is of an original plane that dropped troops onto Normandy. According to the museum it still flies today!



Until next time,