



# That We Might Be Free



On April 1, 1973, the most influential man in my life left this earthly realm. My thoughts turn to him occasionally even today, as I hear one of his favorite tunes or see a food that he loved to eat. I remember him walking around whistling Dean Martin tunes or singing in an off-key “Me and Mrs. Jones”. He could make the most delicious scrambled eggs with green onions accompanied by German potato pancakes. So goes the silly things we do as kids, I remember sitting there

picking and eating the green onions out of my eggs one by one with a toothpick until Daddy cursed, “Dida, pick up the fork and finish that mess off!” I was only around 5 at the time but remember well that he always gave me most of the onions! During the holidays, he would relish delicacies such as pickled herring, a vile smelling Limburger cheese and his favorite bottle of Peppermint Schnapps.

Later after his death I happened across his military photo and knew that the Veterans presented us with a large flag at his funeral. I know that he had a fascination with war movies and I often had the privilege of staying up a little later at night to watch them with him on the couch.

When I moved to Belgium, the value and memory of his military career and many others took on a different importance for me. In America many sons, daughters, wives and husbands continue to go off to quiet wars or police actions in some distant corner of the world. Sensationalism with the media gives each of these disturbances a spot on the news, but I feel that none affected the world as a whole as did World War II.

I learned in school a little bit about the War and at that time films were being released for the first time with documentation of the widespread terror and destruction in Europe. Perhaps at that time I was too young to understand the impact of war but what I saw on film was imprinted in my memory forever. The Vietnam War was the war of my youth. Many wore the MIA-POW metal armbands. Country Joe and the Fish was singing songs about 1-2-3-4 what are we fighting for and the Doors were popular to listen to under the black light. That was in 1972.

Today most of the western coastline of Europe is lined with peaceful little towns and growing tourist vacation destinations. In the 1940’s, the now peaceful coast was then a region of mass terror and total destruction, known then as “The Atlantic Wall”. If you have had the chance to see the film “Saving Private Ryan” or the many other films over D-day, Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, or the Bridge at Remagen then you will understand the images I am trying to define. Fine actors such as George C. Scott, Frank Sinatra, James Coburn, Kirk Douglas, Steve McQueen and others portrayed the brave soldiers that accomplished daring feats in the face of the enemy.



One day we took a little ride down the coastline into the neighboring country of France. Familiar names like Dunkerque, Calais and Boulogne appeared on the road signs. I was amazed to see army tanks still in position high along the coastal dunes, remnants from the earlier years. We decided the area near Calais would be a good spot to stop because of it being within seeing distance of the White Cliffs of Dover, just across the narrowest part of the English Channel. Two magnificent lookout points called Cap Blanc-Nez (White nose) and Cap Gris-Nez (Greynose) tower high above the rocky coastline in this vicinity. The serenity and recreation that is found here today on these vistas falsely hides the purpose and history of their former years.



As enthusiasts catch the updraft of the morning coastal wind, they glide without fear over the pock marked hillsides that were once covered with hidden resistance. The French resistance was called Maquisards, named after the Maquis, or fence row type bushes in which they hid.



German bunkers still stand with their stark sentinel over the channel. One can only imagine the sights, smells and sounds of war (especially if you have seen Saving Private Ryan) when you stand inside the solid structures that defy time and weather. A museum housed inside one bunker displays the history of the area and the architectural genius of the man Todt who designed the strongholds of the German forces. The weaponry and vehicles displayed outside remind visitors of the countries involved and the strength and means of defense.



Now many of the bunkers stand silently empty, some crumbling from direct hits of mortar fire and some from the affects of nature trying to take back what was hers. The sheer size of the dome of the bunker makes one stand in awe at the size of the cannons used and the space it took to cover it from spying eyes overhead. Inside in the cold darkness their walls are still covered with the attitudes and ideas of their occupants. Lit only by a cigarette lighter, very dim light from a corridor or the flash of the camera itself can you still see the artistry of the men who spent their time inside.



With the allied defeat of the Atlantic Wall, the fast sweep inland through many of the small towns and villages sent the German forces into fast retreat. Still trying to resist the oncoming flood of military force, the German armies held tight to some areas and some of those areas I visited and will be writing about in the upcoming series, That We Might Be Free. Keep that patriotism alive and those flags flying high!

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## NOTICE

The Veteran's Administration is partnering with the Pawnee Indian Health Center to enroll all Native American and non-Indian Veterans for health care benefits the third Thursday of every month from 10:30 am to 1:00pm. Veterans will be able to get questions answered about their benefits without traveling to Tulsa, Muskogee or Oklahoma City. The Pawnee Service Unit is located on the Pawnee Nation Tribal Reserve, 1201 Heritage Circle, in Pawnee, Oklahoma 74058, for more information call:

(918) 762-6724

## ### SEPTEMBER 2012 ###

MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI
Fall is on its way - Everyone get ready! No Meals on Labor Day.	<b>Elders Trip – Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup></b> (Please note no transports will be made during this week)	<b>No Transports on: 6<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup></b> (will be in kitchen cooking specialty meals)	Anita Stevens, Elders Coord. 918-968-3526 or 800-259-3970, ext. 1054. Kitchen =ext. 1058	
<b>LABOR DAY OFFICES CLOSED</b>	Lima Beans w/Ham Spinach Corn Bread Fruit Cup	BBQ Chicken Dressing/Gravy Green Beans SF Jell-o	Hamb. Enchiladas Spanish Rice Refried Beans Fruit	Catfish Fries Corn on Cob Cole Slaw Cookies
Brown Beans Cornbread Zucchini Fruit Cup	Chili Dog w/cheese Fries Fresh Veggies Fruit Cup	Chicken & Rice Carrots Crackers White Cake	Polish Sausage Sauerkraut Green Beans Bread Jello	Toasted Bagel Boiled Egg Sausage Patty Juice
Indian Tacos Fresh Veggies Salsa Fruit Cup	Black-eyed Peas Spinach Cornbread Fruit Cup	Hoagie Sandwich Carrot Salad Chips Cookies	Beef-n-Noodles Green Beans Wheat Bread Jello	Chicken/Vegetable Soup Crackers Fruit Cup
Cheeseburgers Fries Fresh Veggies Fruit Cup	Chef Salad Crackers Cookies	Meatloaf Mashed Potatoes Carrots Fruit Cup	Tuna Salad Sand. Beets Chips Fresh Fruit	Banana Pancakes Bacon Fried Egg Milk