



Thursday, November 7, 2013 No. 44 Phone 534-3121 \$1.00

70 Years After WWII... **A son pays tribute to his Father and the Greatest Generation**

By Cheryl Nymann, Editor

A part of the Greatest Generation will live on forever thanks to the Diary of a young WWII Veteran and the love of a son whose admiration for his father has allowed the public a look into the past of a B-17 Bomber Veteran.

Merrel Duncan was one of the few who survived the 30 hazardous missions over WWII Europe which was occupied by Germans. Of the first 48 B-17 Bombers that were there, 41 of them were lost, and Merrel Duncan. With doubts that he would make it home alive, Merrel began to keep a Diary which recorded every mission. Merrel would make it home, and many years later, he would share his story with his son Michael, a Vietnam War Veteran.

In honor of his best friend and father, along the many other amazing veterans of WWII, Michael (then of Lake City) commissioned Brian

Moon, (then of Frontenac), to paint his father's B-17 in formation with other planes of the Bomb Group. The finished artwork, entitled 'The Last Mission' has been published by Michael as a limited edition print. Along with that, Michael then had the painting made into a print. The print and copy of the 60 page diary were then sold to family members and friends. That was 20 years ago. Now, with the urging of several media, individuals, and Veterans organizations, Michael has re-released the print and diary on a limited edition basis. The story behind the finished product is an interesting path to follow.

Leading up to his father's death in 1989, at the age of 73, Michael said that his father opened up to him about his time during the war. Something not usually talked about, the talks gave an insight into his fathers' life as a B-17

pilot and what a tremendous man he was. His father gave Michael the diary, and wanted him to read it. The night his father passed away, Michael sat and read the 60 page diary.

Michael refused a great deal of money for the rights to the diary, and moved forward with a mission of his own. It took about three years of contacting crew members that flew in the original crew, and some who were in a different bombing crew and visiting with them about his dad, and the missions they were on. In return, he was blessed with many veterans who shared their stories, and pieces of themselves. Veterans from all over the United States shared their photos with Michael. In addition, he also received a cassette tape that was sent to him of the BBC interviewing the crew after the first day of bombing Berlin. There is even a picture of General Eisenhower christening a

B-17 Bomber.

The plates have been destroyed now, and the honor of re-releasing the print and copy of the original diary complete, Michael is honored to share it with the public for the last time. "It's a part of history that should never be forgotten," Michael said in our telephone interview. He continued, "It was the Greatest Generation; back then, they had the whole country behind them as they went to war; now, it's just different."

You can read more about Michaels' print, the diary, and see some of the photos he's received by visiting the website evenparenterprises.com and click on the contact button which will take you right to the 'The Last Mission' page. Michael has done more than honor his father and aviation during WWII, he's shared a piece of history that will never be forgotten.