



Turner Brashear

JUN 1, 1923 - MAY 24, 2012



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Turner G. Brashear Captain ' U.S. Air Force, 535th Bomb Squadron, 381st Bomb Squadron, & 8th Air Force World War II Turner Brashear was only nineteen years old when he joined the U.S. Air Force in World War II. He grew up in the El Cerrito District of Oakland, California. Brashear was the star of his high school's varsity football team. After school one day, Brashear was walking his dogs down his street, when a neighbor came running out his house, and asked if he'd heard about 'the horrible news.' He hadn't heard, so Brashear went back home and learned there had been a bombing at Pearl Harbor. Although he had received a complete scholarship to college for football, Brashear immediately enlisted. At the time, Brashear had a job. He had received a deferment, which meant that he didn't have to join the war because he was working in a shipyard. His boss told him that he wasn't allowed to go and fight, but Turner skipped work and joined the Air Force. His mom, along with his entire family, had mixed feelings about him enlisting. All were afraid that once he joined, he might never return. He valued his family's opinion, but felt it was his duty to defend his country in war. Almost all of Brashear's friends from high school either enlisted in the war, or were recruited. Most of them were drafted, and to this day, Brashear remembers how lucky he was not to have to fight as a foot soldier in the infantry. Once he joined the Air Force, Brashear wanted to fly a fighter plane. He felt that 'if you were a fighter pilot, you only had yourself to worry about; you had no crew on board.' Flying a fighter plane was also more glorified, like driving a Porsche, instead of an old truck. Once Brashear completed several hard months of training, he took his Pilot test, and was assigned to fly a bomber plane, instead of a fighter one. Although Brashear was disappointed, he accepted his position and said that anything was better than not doing anything at all. He claims, 'you couldn't not join the war. No way you could walk down the streets and hold your head up.' At his base in Ridgewell, England, Brashear flew a B-17 bomber plane.



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While he was there, Brashear formed a tight brotherhood with his other crew members. The only thing he misses from the war is the companionship with the whole crew on your plane. He says, 'war brings guys together, like nothing else, because we are all suffering together.' His crew slept together, ate together, and went on every single mission together. Brashear says, one of the hardest parts of being in the war, was when one of your best friends is badly hurt, or worse, killed. The Air Force then replaces the hurt man immediately; with a new one none of the other crew knew. Before every mission, all of the crew at the base camp had twenty minute long meetings. In the gatherings, they would discuss the target, the time to leave, and the rate of climb for each plane. Immediately after the meeting, Brashear and his crew checked and double checked every part of their entire plane. They made sure that there were at least ten five hundred pound bombs, or a couple of two thousand bombs, and that all controls and radios worked perfectly. If there was one small malfunction, it would be fixed right away. Then, each crew sat in their plane, awaiting takeoff. For Brashear, this was the hardest part. All 1,000 planes could takeoff in less than forty-five minutes. For every mission, the planes took off before dawn, and returned twelve hours later. Once at an altitude of 12, 000 feet, Brashear's plane and eleven others formed one complete squadron. They then climbed at a rate of five hundred feet per minute. During the long missions, each plane had to report in to base by radio every few minutes, and to stay ten feet apart, wing to wing from the other planes. Whenever the planes landed in a place, other than their base camp, they were almost always celebrated. One time, while flying his plane over the English Channel, Brashear ran out of fuel, and had to throw everything extra off the plane to land it safely away from base. He landed there, and says the 'English were great to us all.' His favorite place to land was in France. All the women there fixed lots of food, and drinks for them. He also enjoyed Liege, Belgium. Brashear recalls, 'the town treated us like royalty. We were superstars.' His clearest memory was when his plane was 'shot up' in Berlin. He remembers being able to see the shells bursting like little lights, and thinking, 'there is no way I'm getting out of here alive.' Although Brashear was not religious, he continuously recited the Lord's Prayer to help him get back to base safely, because his mother used to say it to comfort him when he was



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younger. Because of all the difficult memories in Berlin, Brashear says he will never return there. Although Brashear is not pro war, he thinks 'our country never would have given up, we had to fight in this war, and we had to win.' He wishes that people never had to fight in wars because they are terrible, and too many innocent people die because of wars. Once the war had ended, Brashear got married, and had two children, one son and one daughter. His son was born with a disability in his hands, but if he didn't have that problem, Brashear says that he would have liked his son to join a war, because it teaches great discipline. If he was given the chance to speak with a soldier in Iraq, he would tell him or her, 'you have my heartfelt thoughts, Thank You!' In my opinion, fighting in World War II was a plus in the life of Turner Brashear. As a soldier, he felt extremely welcome and most the places which he went, Brashear was treated with the utmost honor. He was awarded his wings, several badges for flying a bomber plane, and the highest award a pilot can get. He says he still misses the companionship from the war that he formed with his crew, and friends. Brashear says he is definitely not upset about missing college to fight. During the time when he served, he was always given quite decent food, and a comfortable bed to sleep upon. 'We had to fight this war', he says, 'and I'm glad I got to help.' Without fighting as a B-17 bomber pilot in World War II, Brashear would not have formed close friendships with others like him, learned discipline, and most importantly, he wouldn't have helped to fight for our country, in high hopes of victory. Captain Turner G. Brashear joined the USAAF on June 1, 1943. He earned his flying wings at one of his several different training camps all over the nation at Douglas Arizona. He was proudly graduated by his training center as part of 43-F class. During his training, Brashear flew a Pt-22 plane. It was a makeshift bomber plane, and contained a single engine, and a scrappy metal fuselage. The plane also had canvas wings. After he received his wings, Brashear was immediately stationed in Ridgeway, England. His base was station number one hundred sixty-seven. Here, Brashear flew a Boeing B-17, in the 535th bomb squadron, the 381st bomb group, and the 8th Air Force. His first official combat mission was on November 24, 1944. Flying his B-17 flying fortress, Brashear took the battle to enemy occupied Europe every day of his enlistment, if the weather permitted. Without Luftwaffe



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intercepting, rarely was a mission flown. There was an ever present barrage of anti-aircraft fire. Also, the squadron seldom returned a full formation without any casualties, or losses. Hitting almost every target in German hands for several months, the 381st Bomb Group reached the peak of its effectiveness, and for four months, it was ranked number one in the Eighth Division. Turner G. Brashear played a vital role in destroying Hitler's Germany, and was one of the greatest bomber pilots to survive. Brashear's efforts helped Germany become defeated, and lead the Allies to victory. Interview by Natalie Cooper in June, 2009. St. Mark's School 8th Grade Oral History Project. St. Mark's School Faculty Advisor: Mike Fargo Services for Mr. Brashear will be held at Skylawn Funeral Home at 1:30pm on Tuesday, May 29th.



Tribute Wall

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Anonymous posted:

There are many fascinating time limits in this article however I don't know if they all center to heart. You can find some validity however I am going to take hold opinion until I take a look at it further. Good article , thanks therefore we want extra! Combined with FeedBurner as properly imported-beginSantanimported-end

December 30 at 3:42 AM



Anonymous posted:

There are some interesting closing dates on this article but I don't know if I see all of them center to heart. There may be some validity however I will take maintain opinion till I look into it further. Good article , thanks and we wish extra! Added to FeedBurner as well imported-beginHendraimported-end

December 28 at 2:27 AM



Anonymous posted:

I was saddened to hear about Turner's passing this year in May. I was a secretary for Turner in the Pacific Lumber days many years ago. I am now retired from the business world. I have such fond memories of my time working for and knowing Turner – he was a "class act" – a man of integrity and honor....there will not be another. Very sad to hear of his passing. Elsa Pyne imported-beginElsa Pyneimported-end

October 8 at 11:52 AM



Anonymous posted:

i always thought turner was one of the good guys. i remember turner from the early 60's when i worked for victor equipment company in norwalk, ca. we will miss him and i pray for his family. imported-begindoug morrisimported-end

June 18 at 2:28 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Turner by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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