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## A true American war hero

Wayne Bean

Posted November 19, 2009 at 5:10 p.m.

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Veterans Day 2009 marked the 90 birthday of our neighbor Wayne Downing. The event was marked with a small celebration organized by neighbor Mary Beth Roberts.

Wayne Edward Downing, born 1919 in Ute, Iowa. Graduated East Sioux City IA HS (1937) He worked his way through three years of college at Denver University CO; then volunteered for the aviation cadet program. Later degrees were earned at University of Arizona (BS '58); and University of Maine (M Ed. '63).

1942-43

He received commission and pilot wings, USAAF Class 42F (July 4th, 1942). He was assigned to 84th BG (DIVE) as A-31 Vengeance Pilot at Hunter Field GA; 85th BG (DIVE) as A-24 Dauntless Pilot at Waycross GA and Army maneuvers in TN; 46th BG (L) as B-25 Mitchell Pilot at Will Rogers OK and 30th Recon SQ as A-20 Havoc Pilot at Northern Field TN.

1943-45

He flew 86 combat missions from England and France as an A-20 Havoc and A-26 Invader Pilot with the 2911 BS (L), 67RG and 668 BS (L) and 670 (L) of the 416th Bomb Group. US Decorations awarded: Distinguished Flying Cross, 17 Air Medals, 6 ETO Battle Stars, and two Presidential Unit Citations.

1946-49

Was assigned to Aircraft Maintenance Office School at Chaute Field IL and then to Central and South Pacific to participate in Search and Recovery of "Body Bones,



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### Videos

Bombs and Aircraft crashes” not yet recovered from WW II with USS LST 711 as cruise HQ.

1949-50

Assigned as F-82 Twin Mustang Pilot, 27th Fighter Wing at Bergstrom AFB TX. Participated in U.S. Air shows, goodwill missions to Central America, Puerto Rica, U.S. Virgin LIslands and war training maneuvers in Texas

1951-52

Completed engineering courses, armament courses, munitions courses and radiological courses at Minnesota University MN, Fairchild AFB-WA, Edgewood Arsenal MD, Lowry AFB-CO and flew the Tumbler-Snapper Atomic Tests in Nevada.

1952-53

Assigned to new Jet Bomber Program. Completed Jet Navigator, Air Radar Operator, Bombardier, and Air Gunner schools at Ellington AFB-TX, Mather AFB-CA and Davis Monthan AFB-AZ; and received the respective USAF aeronautical ratings.

1953-59

Assigned as B-47 Stratojet Pilot and Aircraft Commander, 65 BS 43rd Bomb Group Davis-Monthan AFB-AZ with Cold War mission TDY’s to England, North Africa, Alaska and Guam.

1959-63

Assigned as B-52 Stratofortress Pilot and Aircraft Commander, 341 BS 4038th Strategic Wing Dow AFB-ME with Cold War Airborne Alert missions to Russia’s early warning net locations.

1963-98

Taught mathematics courses in high school and community college. In summer recesses worked with NATO country Military Reserve Officers in Europe. Completed all the levels of US Civil Air Patrol Search and Rescue training and flew search missions for missing aircraft, people and smugglers in mountains and desert of US Southwest.

1982

Taught mathematics to sailors of US NAVY’s Independence Battle Group operating in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea based on US NAVY’s DDG-2 C.F. Adams.

1991-99

Worked as an accountant for Keyes Motor Company of Van Nuys, CA.

Wayne is married to Norma Raley Downing, US Army nurse who landed on Utah

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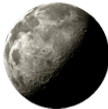
Flight 261, ten years later



Ten years after Flight 261

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Fair  
Wind: Calm

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43°

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Beach, Normandy, France in July 1944 and nursed the wounded there through the battle of the bulge in Belgium and on until World War II ended. They have a daughter Nancy and granddaughter Sara. Wayne & Norma live in Thousand Oaks, CA

Footnote:

World War II photos of Wayne Downing can be found on: "www.416th.com". Click on the following Bomb Squadrons: 2911 BS, 668BS and 670BS.

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"Live. Love. Archstone." Photo Contest

Archstone Ventura Colony

Open House, Edward Jones

Edward Jones

10 a.m.

Work by Michael Zelcer and Andy Lakey

Gallery 28 at Seabridge

Heroes: A Celebration of Great Americans

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum

10 a.m.

Free, Ongoing Mental Health Recovery Classes

Ventura County Behavioral Health Clinic - Thousand Oaks

10 a.m.

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http://www.vcstar.com/news/2009/nov/19/true-american-war-hero/

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