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Air Force leaders' Memorial Day message

By Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III send the following Memorial Day message to the Airmen of the Air Force and their families:

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force and their Families: On Memorial Day, Americans pause in solemn remembrance of the more than one million Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who gave their lives to secure our freedoms. American flags will be lowered to half-staff in town squares, on military bases, private homes, and American government facilities around the world in everlasting tribute to those who gave their all in our Nation's defense. This year is particularly poignant as it marks the 70th anniversary of

the end of World War II. With each passing day, the memories of war, the faces of the fallen, and the stories of heroism in battle fade as the surviving members of the Greatest Generation become fewer. Their spirit of sacrifice and devotion to duty, however, remain steadfast. America's debt to its brave servicemen and women is one that can only be repaid by continuing their legacy of patriotism and valor. To the families of all who have served and who serve today, we offer our humble gratitude on behalf of a grateful nation. At noon on Memorial Day, flags will once again be raised to full staff – a symbol of the resilience of America and those who serve her even today in countless areas around the globe. To those who are currently defending our Nation, we say "thank you!" We are privileged to stand with you in service to the United States of America.

Patriot Files: a rainy day in June

By Staff Sgt. Jarad A. Denton
501st Combat Support Wing Public Affairs

The light rain began to soak through his uniform. It was nearly 4 a.m. and Tech. Sgt. Bill Toombs stood outside his barracks, waiting for a ride to the chow hall, when he heard something strange off in the distance.

"Listen to the thunder," a friend said, as both he and Toombs heard the resounding crashes. Toombs paused and listened again to the rolling, almost rhythmic, barrage that seemed to float into RAF Debach, England from across the nearby water.

"That doesn't sound like thunder," Toombs said as he boarded the truck to breakfast.

Nearly 71 years later, Toombs recalled his very first mission, as a flight engineer and gunner with the 493rd Bombardment Group, during a visit to RAF Alconbury, May 18, 2015.

"Ipswich was pretty close to the [English] Channel, and we could hear the guns from the battleships across the water," the 91-year-old veteran said. "We knew there was going to be an invasion, didn't

know when. No one had any idea."

Every day for nearly five weeks, Toombs and his crew had been flying around England in a B-24 Liberator, getting the lay of the land and learning to maintain aerial formations. On that particular morn-

ing, he had just finished eating when everyone was called for a mission briefing. Sitting in the cramped room, Toombs said he was prepared for an ordinary training mission. He wasn't ready for what the executive officer said when he began the briefing.

"Gentlemen," the executive officer began, pulling back a curtain to reveal a map of Normandy, France. "This morning we're going to invade the continent." As the briefing ended, the 19-year-old from Little Rock, Ark. sat in complete shock as the minutes before the invasion

ticked away, June 6, 1944.

"My first mission was D-Day," Toombs said. "[We] didn't have time to think about the invasion or anything."



For more on "Patriot Files" see page 2

Photo Perspective



Maj. Tina Dauzat, 65th Force Support Squadron commander, assumes command from Col. Stephen Carson, 65th Mission Support Group commander, at the Top of the Rock Club on Lajes Field, May 19. (U.S. Air Force photo/Guido Melo)



Technical Sgt. Andrew Williams with the 65th Security Forces Squadron carries the American flag during a retreat ceremony that brought Police Week to a close at Lajes Field, May 15. (U.S. Air Force photo/Guido Melo)

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Scrambling for his B-24, affectionately named "Baby Doll," Toombs had no idea what to expect - having never experienced actual combat. The pilot, Lt. William Bowden, guided the aircraft into the sky, where it joined 39 other bombardment groups which comprised the 8th Air Force's role in what would become one of the most significant moments of World War II.

"The first lesson is that you can't lose a war if you have command of the air," said Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, 8th AF commander during D-Day. "And you can't win a war if you haven't."

Doolittle's reflections on the necessity of airpower proved accurate, as the bomb runs made by groups like the "Fighting 493rd" obliterated the Nazi fortifications along the Atlantic Wall. Despite dense cloud

coverage, Toombs and the crew of Baby Doll aided 628 bombers in destroying 74 of the 92 enemy radar stations along the Normandy coasts.

"That was the easiest mission I ever flew," Toombs said. "No encounter with the enemy whatsoever - no fighters, no anti-aircraft fire, nothing."

When the dust settled and the largest single-day amphibious assault in history was over, Toombs said his perspective on war was quite different from his battle-hardened compatriots.

"It gave you a false impression of war," he said. "I thought, 'well, man, this is nothing.' This is going to be easy - until [I flew] the next mission."

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Base Announcements

Lajes Field Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate (DAVA) Services
The Air Force Credentialing Opportunities Online (AF COOL) Program:

Base Honor Guard

Eagle Eyes

GTC Payment Options

Expanded Influenza Vaccine Available

New housing website

All members PCS'ing from Lajes Field with Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)

TMO Information

Civilian Personnel Newsletter

Non-command sponsored dependents memorandum

BAH Revalidation Required for All Airmen

65th Medical Group Closed for Training 2nd Tuesday of Each Month

MSP Career Development/Customer Service Closed Every Wednesday

TMO walk-in customer service hours: 0800-1400 M-Th, 0900-1400 F

[Click to read for more Base Announcements](#)

Community Events

Wing Promotion Ceremony 29 May

Non-command sponsored dependents memorandum available on Lajes Link

Airfield Driving Training Reminder

[Click to read for more Community Events](#)

Island Events

Island Bullfights

Angra Chamber of Commerce Food Festival 24 April - 17 May

Movies:

Angra Theater (Located at Angra Cultural Center)

Praia Theater

[Click to read for more Island Events](#)

Commander's Action Line

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