

A MOMENT OF HONOR FROM BALDWIN COUNTY (6 OCT, 2009)

Thank you Chairman Bishop, commission members and the Administrative staff for honoring us.....and Dr Barry Booth, Dir/Veteran/Guardian, South Alabama Honor Flight, 16 Sept....30 minutes...30 sec.

As Custer may have wondered at Little Bighorn, 'sure were a lot of Indians', and there were sure a lot of old folks on this trip! ...And the war stories made me weak, and some, even believable! Hey, we loved it!

Yesterday when we were young....as the song goes and then we became, perhaps humbly, the Greatest Generation, and we were proud of our moments, defining and part of our legacy. We still are.

- A meeting with Senator Bob Dole –inspiration for the WWII Memorial, the 'jewel of the mall' ...and a visit with Rep Bonner at the Alabama site, and Senator Sessions later.

- Our trek led us to the other memorials (Lincoln, Korean, and Vietnam) - magnificent, in regal splendor and a reminder of war's final price.

- Enchanted by the replica of those Marines raising the flag on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima victory.

- A tug at the heart, and a tear or two when we watched in reverence the precise eternal march of the 3d Infantry at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

- A reminder that 'older men declare war, it is the youth that must fight and die' from a recent article by Principals Rabon and Overstreetand each of us received letters of thank you for our service from the local youth.

Ironically, I am reading a book by Bob Greene called: "Duty, A father, his son and the man who won the war."...A little town in Ohio as Greene remembers his father, a young WWII infantryman, and Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the Enola Gay. He noted his father and Tibbets were similar in a kind of duty, honor and country thing....'Those were the days, my friends.'

(I salute the heroes in this room).