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Series: Speech File Draft Files
Subseries: Chron File, 1989-1993

OA/ID Number: 13499
Folder ID Number: 13499-006

Folder Title:
"My Impressions of World War II" - Life Magazine 8/89 [1]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	25	6	4	5

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 28, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: DAVID DEMAREST *DD*

FROM: CHRISS WINSTON *CW*

SUBJECT: LIFE MAGAZINE ARTICLE

I. SUMMARY

LIFE Magazine is very excited with the article you wrote recounting your remembrances of World War II. But, they have a few minor changes to request, and questions they would like you to review.

First, attached are a series of additional questions LIFE would like you to consider answering. Some are explanations of terms, and others are additional personal memories you may or may not feel comfortable providing. Again, they will only edit the text to add the answers you provide.

Second, attached are some minor grammatical and clarification changes LIFE would like you to consider. They understand no changes are to be made without your approval. If you would simply mark "ok" next to the ones you feel are appropriate, we will relay your changes to them.

II. DISCUSSION

LIFE MAGAZINE QUESTIONS:

1. JUNE 12, 1942

A. First, they would like you to provide some details on the room in Boston where your swearing-in took place. They are looking for a sense of the atmosphere in the room. For example, (and you need not stick to these questions) were

WORKING DRAFT

MY IMPRESSIONS -- WORLD WAR II

December 7, 1941

I was walking across the campus at Andover when I heard the news. I was 17. It came as a shock -- a jolt -- an awakening. I did not fully comprehend world affairs. My interests were our undefeated soccer season just finished, basketball -- baseball coming up. Christmas vacation only a couple of weeks away, graduation, then college. Things changed instantly. I knew right then that I wanted to go into the service.

December 8, 1941

Our headmaster, a great historian and tough disciplinarian, summoned us all into George Washington Hall, the school's assembly place. There was the normal joking, kidding, sloppy posture. Dr. Fuess called to order the 800 students by saying something like this: "your country is at war. We have just played the Star Spangled Banner. From now on when the Star Spangled Banner is played you will stand at attention, hands at your sides and you will show respect." From that day on, without fail, I have stood at attention when the Star Spangled Banner was played.

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Secretary of War Henry Stimson, an alumnus of Andover, gave the commencement address. He encouraged the graduating class to get some college education before serving. I was determined not to go on to college but to become a Navy pilot. Secretary Stimson was a towering world figure but I wondered about this call of his.

June 12, 1942

1. delete
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On my 18th birthday I was sworn into the Navy as a Seaman 2nd Class, the first step towards becoming a Navy pilot. The Navy had just changed the rules. It no longer required two years of college before becoming a Navy pilot; pilots were urgently needed. ^① The Navy moved to accept High School graduates for pilot training. Walter Levering, LT USNR, swore me in at Boston. I went on active duty as an Aviation Cadet August 6, 1942.

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Having been stationed at Chapel Hill for preflight, Minneapolis for Primary Training, and Corpus Christi for Advanced, I received my Navy wings and Ensign's Commission June 4. I was still 18 years old. I wanted to fly in combat. All my classmates wanted to fly in combat. Our country was at war -- united. I selected Torpedo Bombers. . . I fell in love early on with the 'low and slow' TBF. The Grumman Avenger carried 2,000 lbs. of bombs, the biggest single engine aircraft in the fleet. It had a crew of 3. I went off to Fort Lauderdale to learn to fly it. Training up and down the East coast, dropping torpedoes off Cape Cod, bombs and torpedoes in Lake Okechobee, Florida, Chincoteague, Virginia, Charleston Rhode Island, Miami. . . I saw 'em all. I had an Ensign's stripe and an Admiral's confidence. I was a Navy pilot.

Spring - Summer 1944

I was assigned to Air Group 51, the first air group to be aboard the new fast Carrier San Jacinto, CVL 30. We went on a "shake down cruise" to Trinidad, put San Jac into Commission at Philadelphia, headed for the Pacific via the Panama Canal, touched the USA one last time at San Diego and then went West.

3. delete
yellow
substitute
language

4. delete
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substitute
language

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yellow

6. delete
yellow

WORKING DRAFT

9. delete yellow
 10. substitute language
 11. addition
 12. CAPS
 13. CAPS

September 1944 ⁹ -- aboard the FINBACK in Japanese waters
 The Submarine stayed on its war patrol ¹⁰ ¹¹ (in Japanese waters) and I along with 2 other rescued pilots and 2 crewmen spent the next 30 days standing watch and counting my blessings. We got depth charged by Japanese ships. ¹² The submariners in Finback didn't seem too concerned about that, but Jim Beckman, Tom Keene and I, the 3 rescued pilots, ¹³ didn't like that a bit. Finback's skipper won a silver star for sinking Japanese ships.

October 1944

14. delete yellow
 15. delete yellow
 16. delete yellow

Back in Pearl Harbor for a week at a "rest home" ¹⁴ -- some flying, then hitch hiked back to the fleet -- Task Force 38 under Admiral Bull Halsey off the Philippines. I wondered at the tremendous Naval power ¹⁵ I saw in and around Pearl Harbor and at Ulithe Atoll. ¹⁶ You could feel things moving our way. We were shown the pictures of Japanese atrocities. It was Hirohito's fault. Hitler was beginning to get kicked hard in Europe but for us there was one unifying symbol -- Hirohito and the evil he represented. I wanted badly to rejoin my squadron -- to fly more, to do my part.

November 1944

17. delete yellow

I flew my final combat mission over Luzon Bay, November 19, 1944. ¹⁷ Puffs of antiaircraft fire, black and menacing, but nothing like the concentrated fire over Chi Chi Jima. Still you wonder.

WORKING DRAFT

18. delete
yellow

There was a sense of exhilaration in our ready room. We were going home. We'd probably make it in time for Christmas. ⁽¹⁸⁾

19. delete
yellow

Several of our VT 51 squadron mates had been killed, but that was accepted. ⁽¹⁹⁾ The war had us together on one track. In a sense, the ferocity of the battle helped heal the hurt for our fallen comrades. It was our duty, our honor. We were fighting for the USA against tyranny. The Country was united. We, on a carrier, were a part of something great and good. At times we were scared, but there were never any doubts.

Christmas Eve 1944

20. addition

I arrive home. I stop at the Rye ⁽²⁰⁾ Station ^(N.Y.) on the way to Greenwich. There my fiancée, Barbara, climbs on the train. We go the 10 minutes to Greenwich. My mother and dad meet us. I was glad to be home for Christmas. I was glad to be surrounded by love. At church the next day, Christmas Day, ⁽²¹⁾ I counted my blessings. I thanked God I was home -- and in the quiet of our church I thought about Jim Wykes, Dick Houle, Ted White, John Delaney, and the others who would never come home for Christmas.

21. delete
yellow

22. delete
yellow

⁽²²⁾ I think I asked "Why," but there was not any agony about the cause. There were no divisions about the War. We were right, God was on our side.

WORKING DRAFT

We had suffered a surprise attack and, now three years later we were winning; and I, a 20 year old Lt. (j.g.) was part of the greatest fighting force in the world. I had grown up. I had flown with the best off a great carrier that flew the Texas flag into battle. I was part of a team. We cared about each other in our squadron. We understood each other's fears and loves. We played together, sang together, flew together. We bitched about our Squadron Commander -- too tough, too demanding, too serious. But we loved to fly on his wing -- we respected Don Melvin.

If we hot dogged it or risked the lives of the ship's crew by some careless maneuver, Captain Beauty Martin would kick some serious butt, but he was our Captain and we bragged about him. He didn't know me from Adam's off Ox. But why should he -- I had one stripe, finally 1 1/2, and he had 4. We gave him a lot of room. We gave him a lot of respect.

We were the best pilots. When we ground-looped on land, it was that damned gust of wind, or it was low hydraulics in the left brake. When we missed the proper wire landing on the carrier, it was that crazy landing signal officer. . ."Damn fool, had me too high all the way in, or too fast, or too slow"; but we never told him. He held our lives in his hands.

WORKING DRAFT

And besides, the skipper always thought he was right.

13. delete
yellow We were the best. . . cocky devils, sure of our ability, sure of our mission. ⁽²³⁾ 20 years old, and we knew exactly what had to ⁽²⁴⁾ ~~be~~ done.

14. addition
We knew we were right and that we would win.

15. delete
yellow Winter - Spring 1945

Barbara and I were married January 6th. We had time for a honeymoon, then off we went to carrier re-qualification in the Great Lakes. We bought our first car -- a 1941 Plymouth -- price \$350 and drive across Canada to join our squadron in Lewiston, Maine. Up and down the East Coast in VT 153, a new torpedo squadron manned by some of my pals from VT 51. I checked out in the F4U, the hot-shot gull wing Corsair fighter. . . and for a moment I wondered if "low and slow" was good enough for me anymore. A fleeting thought only, since by now the feel of the TBF was a part of my very existence. The TBF was a forgiving airplane -- and though I was a pretty good pilot, I'd still make some pilot's errors that needed forgiveness.

WORKING DRAFT

June, 1948

27. delete
yellow A brand new college grad, my first job ahead, I drive to Odessa, Texas. The war seems long ago, far behind -- ahead lies a whole new exciting life.

January 20, 1989

28. CAPS I am sworn in as President of the United States. A TBF on a float goes by in our Inaugural parade. On it are some squadron mates from VT 51 and a couple of old submariners who were aboard Finback when she picked me out of the drink off Chi Chi Jima. They are smiling and waving. No-one knows who they are. But I know.

February, 1989

I am in Japan for the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. It is an icy cold day and the long ceremony is beautifully done. Sitting there in the cold, surrounded by World leaders, I had time to think. Yes, I thought about the burst of anti-aircraft fire from Chi Chi Jima that killed my friends, but that thought did not dominate. I thought about Hirohito going to call on MacArthur, about Japan's remarkable recovery and about her democracy. I thought about the quiet little man and his love of nature and how that contrasted with the horrible pictures we saw 45 years ago. . .I thought of Japan. And I thought of forgiveness.

Our alliance is strong, our friendship is genuine. They are now a democracy. How remarkable that is. Maybe Ted White, Jack Delaney, and Jim Wykes did not die in vain. It was right that I went back to Japan to the Emperor's funeral.

#

To CW
Date 7/27 Time 1045A

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M. Mary Simon

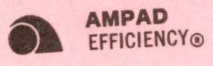
of _____
Phone 522-2598

Area Code	Number	Extension
TELEPHONED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE CALL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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WANTS TO SEE YOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	URGENT <input type="checkbox"/>

RETURNED YOUR CALL

Message Loved the Bush
piece.

Want do run piece & looking
for more pictures.
① Andover pic. RN
② Pic at Hirohito's funeral
③ brade pic.



23-020

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 26, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *W*
FROM: MARK DAVIS *MD*
SUBJECT: NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES SPEECH

THE PRESIDENT AS SPOKE
7/28/89

I. SUMMARY

On Friday, July 28, 1989, you will address approximately 700 people in the Grand Ballroom of the J. W. Marriott at 3:20 p.m. Crowd will be comprised of the Board of Directors and members of the National League of Families -- a MIA/POW organization. You will be accompanied on stage by 10 people, introduced by George Brooks, Head of the Board of Directors, and then deliver a 15 minute speech as prepared on the teleprompter.

II. DISCUSSION

This speech reaffirms your commitment to learn the fates of MIA/POWs in Indochina.

*put in a mention
of Vesey (p. 7)*

Davis/Martin
July 27, 1989
Draft: Four
Title: Missing

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES/J.W. MARRIOTT
July 28, 1989/3:20 p.m.

Thank you George and Ann. It's an honor to be back with the National League of Families.

Earlier, I was reflecting on the magnitude of what you have endured through so many years of uncertainty. Despite your burdens, you have brought about a change in our nation that will never be reversed. Your organization provides us all with a stirring example of how citizens working together can help craft sound policy.

As you know, Barbara and I returned from Central and Eastern Europe two weeks ago. And in the faces of the brave workers of Gdansk and the hopeful students of Budapest, I saw a truth that cannot be denied -- the democratic ideal is winning the hearts of people around the world.

It is this ideal that we honor when we fly the flag. And it is for this ideal that so many Americans were ready when their country called.

Today we see the symbol of this commitment, the League's POW/MIA flag, on permanent display in the Rotunda of our nation's Capitol. It stands in a position of tremendous honor. And it will not come down until we have the fullest possible accounting of your missing loved ones.

Your flag can be seen across this land -- over statehouses, fire stations, schools, military installations and stadiums, even on ships at sea -- a stirring reminder that America's sons are still missing.

The ideals for which your loved ones fought may finally be coming to pass -- the failure of totalitarian and repressive communist regimes. The evidence is clear through recent events in China, the Soviet Union and even in Cambodia, where Vietnam appears to be withdrawing its troops.

Some of our finest young men and women were lost during the many long years of the Vietnam War. And the divisions that resulted from our involvement there shook our country to its core. But as tragic as the loss of a loved one is, even more difficult to endure is the uncertainty which, for you, has extended over so many years.

Now we are coming to a time when the divisions of the Vietnam War are healing; we have let go of the bitterness of the past. But with this reconciliation comes a temptation to forget those who served. **Yet we will not forget. And we will never break ranks.**

My friend and predecessor, Ronald Reagan, had a personal commitment to determine the fates of your missing loved ones. Because of his commitment, and your perseverance, the policies of this organization are now the policies of the United States government.

When I sought the presidency, I renewed President Reagan's pledge that we would write no ^{last} ~~lost~~ chapters, we would close no books, we would put away no final memories until your questions about missing and possible prisoners of war have been answered.

And it is as you^r president that I repeat this pledge. . .

~~X~~ Let me simply state the policy of this new Administration. The fullest possible accounting remains a matter of highest national priority. We will do everything that a government can do to recover the missing, and if we discover proof of captivity, we will take action to bring our men home. ~~X~~

~~or~~

~~X~~ ~~((And let me simply state the policy of this new Administration. As long as there is a possibility that Americans remain alive, we will continue our search as a matter of the highest national priority. If we discover proof of captivity, we will take action -- to bring our men home.))~~

And so long as you must live without knowing the fate of your loved ones, the United States will insist, in the name of humanity, that the governments of Indochina give the fullest possible accounting.

Frustration on this sensitive issue is very understandable. I hear those who say more must be done. If more can be done, then it will be. Understand this: **I do not counsel a timid patience, I counsel a bold persistence.** ((PAUSE))

And our persistence is showing some results; since the government embraced the goals of this organization, many more of you have found answers. Each answer has been another sad truth to learn. But every POW/MIA relative that I meet tells me that truth is preferable to the greater agony -- that of not knowing.

The task of learning more is daunting, but we can count on some powerful allies.

First are the national veterans organizations, those who have stood side-by-side with us through the long years. It was these veteran groups, supporting you, which protested government indifference to the POW/MIA issue in earlier years. Their contribution has been indispensable.

Other partners in our quest are the men and women in government who are dedicating their careers to learning the truth about our POWs and MIAs. These public servants are not uninspired bureaucrats just going through the motions. They have a deep and abiding commitment to their task. This is a commitment shared by people in the military services, in the Defense Intelligence Agency, in embassies throughout the world and among those American pilots who bring our fallen soldiers out of Hanoi, to at long last come home.

You also have many friends in both parties in Congress. I especially want to commend Bob Dole, ^{John McCain} Steve Solarz, Bob Lagomarsino and Ben Gilman, for showing the governments of Indochina the strength of bipartisan Congressional commitment to find answers. To keep this issue at the forefront, they have

again passed resolutions establishing National POW/MIA Recognition Day, this year on September 15th.

I must mention how invaluable the guidance of Ann Mills Griffiths has been through the years. Her knowledge and determination are an inspiration, and her participation in the Interagency Group provides critical insights. We will continue to look to her for advice and leadership.

And finally, I pledge to do all I can. I will soon issue a proclamation calling upon all Americans to honor their missing countrymen and those who served as POWs by participating in ceremonies across our nation. But this is just a beginning.

~~As I said in my Inaugural Address,~~ ^{In S.E. Asia} there are today

~~Americans who are held against their will and Americans who are unaccounted for.~~ ^{As I said in my inaug. address} Assistance can be shown here and will be long remembered. **Goodwill begets goodwill."**

POW/MIA

X

We appreciate Vietnam's increased responsiveness to that appeal. An unprecedented level of joint operations has already brought significant progress. But despite our increased activities, many questions remain. Once again, I call on Hanoi to swiftly dispel the shadow of doubt, to shed light on the fate of your loved ones. I call on Hanoi to remove this last vestige of armed conflict between us.

We look forward to normalizing our relations with Vietnam, once a comprehensive settlement has been achieved in Cambodia. That settlement must include genuine power sharing with the non-communist Cambodians led by Prince Sihanouk and in

internationally verified troop withdrawal. But Hanoi must clearly understand that, as a practical matter, the pace and scope of this process will be directly affected by the seriousness of their cooperation on POW/MIA and other humanitarian issues.

In Laos, so many questions remain, and so few answers have been received. In light of the difficulties involved, their agreement earlier this year to a year-round program of cooperation is encouraging. You can be certain that we are seeking to expand this agreement in every possibly way.

We also welcome the Lao Government's agreement to work bilaterally with us on combating the international scourge of narcotics. Implementing this agreement will be critically important to our improved bilateral relationship, which has expanded steadily since 1982. We look to the future in our relations with Laos, recognizing the importance of steps they are taking toward opening their society and developing their economy for the good of the Lao people.

To the families of those missing in Cambodia, I must tell you that our efforts to gain Phnom Penh's humanitarian cooperation on resolving the fates of your missing loved ones has thus far been unsuccessful. Despite their public claims to be

asked holding remains of some Americans, officials there have been deaf to our appeals. I call on Phnom Penh to act responsibly, humanely, and return these remains. Failure to do so will surely hinder their efforts to gain international respect and support.

~~Milton Baker~~

have
how
about
asking
Secretary Baker
this
weekends
the
Monday

The policies pursued during the past eight years have shown some success. Incomplete? Yes . . . but progress is being made because our government is giving it high priority.

As we proceed, we will continue to search for ways to improve the process. We will continue to assemble the best resources, technology and, most of all, qualified people to interview refugees, evaluate intelligence information, and negotiate with foreign governments.

It is with that last mission in mind that I reappointed a man of the highest integrity and qualifications, General Jack Vessey, as my special POW/MIA emissary to Hanoi. I know that Jack was with you this morning, and senior officials from the Departments of State and Defense, and the National Security Council will follow me here. I have charged them all to do their utmost. They know, and share, my deep commitment to your missing loved ones and to you.

The principle^{al} responsibility for the POW/MIA issue rests with the Department of Defense. And for that reason, we are fortunate to have a very talented public servant as our Secretary of Defense. Dick Cheney's years in Congress and his knowledge of intelligence matters give him a rare understanding of, and a deep appreciation for, your concerns.

In closing, I want you to know that in my frequent travels to cities and towns across America, I see many heartfelt demonstrations of support for our cause. Americans know that across our land, every Thanksgiving, there are families that

still set an empty chair at the table. We know that faded photographs and school mementos are still being lovingly kept in scrapbooks. And questions remain, and will remain, until answered.

Now the mothers, fathers, wives, children and friends of another great power share the same kind of grief, share with you lingering doubts about missing loved ones. That this power, the Soviet Union, backed the North Vietnamese; and the United States backed the Afghan freedom-fighters, is an irony. But there is no room in the American heart for a mean-spirited and petty indifference. Far from it.

I am pleased to note that Soviet General-Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev recently made a humanitarian appeal for our help in obtaining the fullest possible accounting for Soviet citizens still prisoner and missing in Afghanistan. Let me answer him today: we will do everything we can. And in return, ^{confidentially} we expect the Soviets ^{mbt} to do all they can do encourage more serious and timely cooperation from their allies in Indochina.

Working together, we can resolve the anguish of many families in two lands. And we can do something more . . . we can build a new spirit of peace.

In Ecclesiastes, it is written that there is a time for war, a time for peace and a time to heal. We will never forget those who served our country. And when we receive final answers about their fate, then this will truly be a time for healing.

Thank you, God bless you and God bless America.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 28, 1989

INFORMATION

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FROM: CHRISS WINSTON *CW*
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A. First, they would like you to provide some details on the room in Boston where your swearing-in took place. They are looking for a sense of the atmosphere in the room. For example, (and you need not stick to these questions) were

there other people present? How many? How long was the ceremony? What was the room like?

- B. Second, what did you do the night or week before you went on active duty August 6, 1942.

2. JUNE, 1943

- A. When you refer to training up and down the East coast, you mention dropping bombs in Lake Okechobee, and other locations, can you describe the kind of bombs and torpedoes you were dropping?
- B. In the same sentence as above, you refer to Charleston - is that Charleston, South Carolina? And, where in Rhode Island did you fly?

3. SEPTEMBER 2, 1944

- A. Please recreate the moment your plane was hit. What did you feel when you were hit? What was your target that day? When did you know you were hit? Just a few more details.
- B. Also, what was the number of your mission that day?

4. NOVEMBER 1944

- A. What was the number of your mission over Luzon Bay, November 19, 1944, the day of your final combat flight?

4. CHRISTMAS EVE 1944

- A. At the beginning of the third paragraph you refer to a "ground-loop". LIFE would like to know for background purposes what is a "ground-loop"?

5. WINTER - SPRING 1945

- A. If you feel comfortable, LIFE would like you to write a couple sentences about your wedding day.

WORKING DRAFT

MY IMPRESSIONS -- WORLD WAR II

December 7, 1941

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December 8, 1941

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On my 18th birthday I was sworn into the Navy as a Seaman 2nd Class, the first step towards becoming a Navy pilot. The Navy had just changed the rules. It no longer required two years of college before becoming a Navy pilot; pilots were urgently needed. ^① The Navy moved to accept High School graduates for pilot training. Walter Levering, LT USNR, swore me in at Boston. I went on active duty as an Aviation Cadet August 6, 1942.

August 6, 1942

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1. delete
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2. delete
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WORKING DRAFT

June, 1943

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Spring - Summer 1944

I was assigned to Air Group 51, the first air group to be aboard ^⑤ the new fast Carrier San Jacinto, CVL 30. We went on a "shake ^⑥ down cruise" to Trinidad, put San Jac into Commission at Philadelphia, headed for the Pacific via the Panama Canal, touched the USA one last time at San Diego and then went West.

3. delete
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substitute
language

4. delete
yellow
substitute
language

5. delete
yellow

6. delete
yellow

WORKING DRAFT

Many of the Air Group and ship's company had spent no time at sea. One roommate, subsequently killed, Tom Waters had a red face, but the seas were so bad that his face literally turned green.

We struck Wake Island on May 23, 1944. My close friend and roommate, Jim Wykes went off on a search mission, and never came back. I lay in my upper bunk and cried for my friend. No-one saw me -- that wouldn't do.

September 2, 1944

Over Chi Chi Jima, my plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire at about 8:30 a.m. The submarine FINBACK picked me out of the water close to the Japanese held island of Chi Chi Jima. I learned later that my crewmen were killed. In that life raft for about 2 hours, wondering if my life would be spared, I prayed to God, I was sick to my stomach and again I shed a tear. I was a very scared kid, just 20, away from his mother and dad, paddling against the wind trying to get further away from the Japanese held island.

7. delete
yellow
Substitute
language

8. delete
yellow
Substitute
language

WORKING DRAFT

9. delete yellow
 10. substitute language
 11. addition
 12. CAPS
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September 1944 ⁹ -- aboard the FINBACK in Japanese waters

The Submarine stayed on its war patrol ¹⁰ ¹¹ (in Japanese waters) and I along with 2 other rescued pilots and 2 crewmen spent the next 30 days standing watch and counting my blessings. We got depth charged by Japanese ships. ¹² The submariners in Finback didn't seem too concerned about that, but Jim Beckman, Tom Keene and I, the 3 rescued pilots, ¹³ didn't like that a bit. Finback's skipper won a silver star for sinking Japanese ships.

October 1944

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WORKING DRAFT

June, 1948

27. delete
yellow

A brand new college grad, my first job ahead, I drive to Odessa, Texas. The war seems long ago, far behind -- ahead lies a whole new exciting life.

January 20, 1989

28. CAPS

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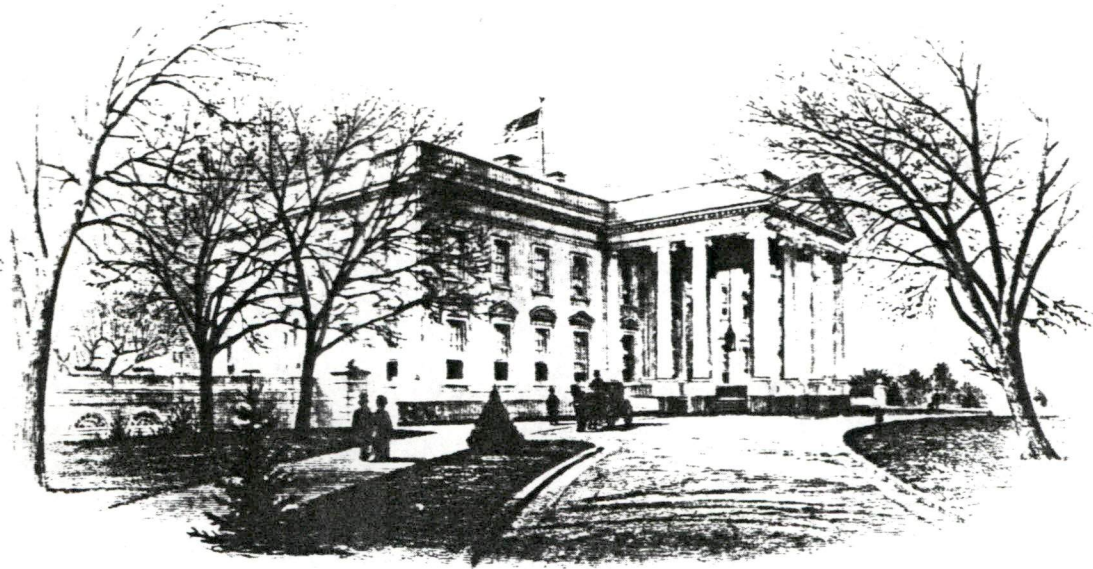
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER 12

DATE 7/27

TO Mary Simon / Life Magazine

FAX NUMBER 212-522-0908

OFFICE NUMBER 212-522-1212

COMMENTS _____

FROM Chriss Winston

FAX NUMBER 202-456-6218

OFFICE NUMBER 202-456-2930

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 26, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *W*
FROM: DANIEL MCGROARTY *DM*
SUBJECT: ESSAY ON WAR EXPERIENCES FOR LIFE MAGAZINE

We have discussed your "war journal" with Life magazine, which is interested in publishing your draft in its entirety. Life will need a working draft as soon as possible.

This draft includes minor grammatical edits, as well as two sentences added to clarify the passages in which they appear. (These additions are bracketted on pages 5 and 10.)

Your draft has been reviewed by General Scowcroft, who suggested toning down references to Emperor Hirohito, which we have done. The General agrees with the Speechwriting Office that your draft will be of great interest to Life's readership, and should be published in its entirety.

If you are comfortable with these changes, we will submit the text to Life as a working draft. You will of course have an opportunity to approve the final, published version.

WORKING DRAFT

MY IMPRESSIONS -- WORLD WAR II

December 7, 1941

I was walking across the campus at Andover when I heard the news. I was 17. It came as a shock -- a jolt -- an awakening. I did not fully comprehend world affairs. My interests were our undefeated soccer team, Christmas vacation only a month away, graduation, then college. Things changed instantly. I knew right then that I wanted to go into the service.

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Spring - Summer 1944

I was assigned to Air Group 51, the first air group to be abroad the new fast Carrier San Jacinto, CVL 30. We went on a "shake down cruise" to Trinidad, put San Jac into Commission at Philadelphia, headed for the Pacific via the Panama Canal, touched the USA one last time at San Diego and then went West.

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212/522-0908

for

Mary Simon
Anna Stewart
212/522-2270

December 7, 1941

LIFE MAG

31st Floor

WORKING DRAFT

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June, 1943

Having been stationed at Chapel Hill for preflight, Minneapolis for Primary Training, and Corpus Christi for Advance, I received my Navy wings and Ensign's Commission June 4. I was still 18 years old. I wanted to fly in combat. All my classmates wanted

to fly in combat. Our country was at war -- united. I selected Torpedo Bombers. . .I fell in love early on with the 'low and slow' TBF. ^{The Grumman Avenger} ~~It~~ carried 2,000 lbs. of bombs, ~~it was~~ the biggest single engine aircraft in the fleet. It had a crew of 3. I went off to Fort Lauderdale to learn to fly, ~~this, the Grumman Avenger.~~ Training up and down the East coast, dropping torpedoes off Cape Cod, bombs and torpedoes in Lake Okechobee, Florida, Chincoteague, Virginia, Charleston Rhode Island, Miami. . .I saw 'em all. I had an Ensign's stripe and an Admiral's confidence. I was a Navy pilot.

Spring - Summer 1944

I was assigned to Air Group 51, the first air group to be abroad the new fast Carrier San Jacinto, CVL 30. We went on a "shake down cruise" to Trinidad; put San Jac into Commission at Philadelphia; headed for the Pacific via the Panama Canal, touched the USA one last time at San Diego and then went West.

more sentence → One roommate, subsequently killed, Tom Waters had a red face, ~~but~~ *and* the seas were so bad that his face turned green. [Many of the Air Group and ship's company had spent no time at sea.]

We struck Wake Island on May 23, 1944. My close friend and roommate, Jim Wykes went off on a search mission, and never came

back. I lay in my upper bunk and cried for my friend, ~~but~~ ^{no} no-one saw me -- that wouldn't do.

September 2, 1944

Over Chi Chi Jima, my plane was hit my anti-aircraft fire at about 8:30 a.m. The submarine Finback picked me out of the water close to the Japanese held island of Chi Chi. I learned later that my crewmen were killed. In that life raft for about 2 hours, wondering if my life would be spared, I prayed, and I vomited, and again I shed a tear. I was a scared kid, just 20, away from his mother and dad.

ALL CAPS?

September 1944 -- abroad the Finback in Japanese waters

~~That [unclear] rescued me~~
The Submarine Finback stayed on its war patrol. We got depth charged by Japanese ships. The submariners in Finback didn't seem too concerned about that, but Jim Beckman, Tom Keene and I, the 3 rescued pilots, didn't like that a bit. Finback's skipper won a silver star for sinking Japanese shippers.

(And I spent 30 days(?) as an amateur submariner?)
Sentence explaining that GB spent next month on FINBACK

October 1944

(?) Back in Pearl Harbor for a week at a "rest home" -- some flying, then hitch hiked back to the fleet -- Task Force 38 under Admiral Bull Halsey off the Philippines. I wondered at the tremendous

Naval power I saw in and around Pearl Harbor and at Ulithe Atoll. You could feel things moving our way. We were still shown the pictures of Japanese atrocities. It was Hirohito's fault. Hitler was beginning to get kicked hard in Europe but for us there was one unifying symbol -- Hirohito and the evil he represented. I wanted ^{to fly} ~~bandy~~ to rejoin my squadron -- to fly more, to do my part.

November 1944

I ^{ew my} fly final combat mission over Luzon Bay, November 19, 1944. Puffs of antiaircraft fire, black ^{and} menacing, but nothing like the concentrated fire over Chi Chi Jima. Still you wonder. There was a sense of exhilaration in our ready room. We were going home. We'd probably make it in time for Christmas. Several of our VT 61 squadron mates had been killed, but that was accepted. The war had us together on one track. In a sense, the ferocity of the battle helped heal the hurt for ^{our} ~~the~~ fallen comrade^s. It was our duty, our honor. We were fighting for the USA against tyranny. The Country was united. We, on a carrier, were a part of something great and good. At times we were scared, but there were never any doubts.

Christmas Eve 1944

better to
leave in
present
tense?

I arrive home. I stopped at the Rye Station on the way to Greenwich. There my Fiancee, Barbara, climbs on the train. We go the 10 minutes to Greenwich. My mother and dad meet us. I was glad to be home for Christmas. I was glad to be surrounded by love. At church the next day, Christmas Day, I counted my blessings. I thanked God I was home -- and in the quiet of our church I thought about Jim Wykes, Dick Houle, Ted White, John Delaney, and other^s who would never come home for Christmas. I think I asked "Why," but there was not any agony about the cause. There were no divisions about the War. We were right, God was on our side. We had suffered a surprise attack and, now three years later we were winning; and I, a 20 year old Lt. (j.g.) was part of the greatest fighting force in the world. I had grown up. I had flown with the best off a great carrier that flew the Texas flag into battle. I was part of a team. We cared about each other in our squadron. We understood each other's fears and loves. We played together, sang together, flew together. We bitched about our Squadron Commander -- to tough, too demanding, too serious^B but we loved to fly on his wing -- we respected Don Melvin.

If we hot dogged it or risked the lives of the ship's crew by some careless maneuver, Captain Beauty Martin would kick some serious butt, but he was our Captain and we bragged about him. He didn't know me from Adam's off Ox. But why should he -- I had

one stripe, finally 1 1/2, and he had 4. We gave him a lot of room. We gave him a lot of respect.

We saw the pictures of Japanese soldiers executing kneeling captives and we knew the Emperor was to blame. We saw the executioners swords held high and as we passed the pictures around we knew we were right and that we would win, and that we were the best. We were the best. . .cocky devils, sure of our ability, sure of our mission, 20 years old, and we knew exactly what had to done.

We were the best pilots. When we ground-looped on land, it was that damned gust of wind, or it was low hydraulics in the left brake. When we missed the proper wire landing on the carrier, it was that crazy landing signal officer. . ."Damn fool, had me too high all the way in, or too fast, or too slow"; but we never told him. He held our lives in his hands, and besides, the skipper always thought he was right. [We hated Hirohito. Evil, he was the epitome of all evil. He started this. He and Hitler.]

move
to #1
above?

Winter - Spring 1945

Barbara and I were married January 6th. We had time for a honeymoon, then off we went to carrier re-qualification in the Great Lakes. We bought our first car -- a 1941 Plymouth -- price \$350. Joining our squadron in Lewiston, Maine, up and down the

East Coast in VT 153, a new torpedo squadron manned by some of my pals from VT 51. I checked out in the F4U, the hot-shot gull wing Corsair fighter. . .and for a moment I wondered if low and slow was good enough for me anymore. ^A Fleeting thought only, since by now the feel of the TBF was a part of my very existence. The TBF was a forgiving airplane and though I was a pretty good pilot, I'd still make some pilots errors that needed forgiveness.

August 1945

I'm 21 now. We are based in Virginia. Barbara and I are having more time together. ^{As of} our new squadron, with orders in hand to go back to the Pacific, starts our final training. . .the war ends. I'll never forget the screaming and the cheering and the dancing in the street and the praying. Bar and I went to church. The War's end meant we would not have to be separated, and that I would not have to cover any more landings of marines on beaches - - seeing them get slaughtered as the Japanese dug in to defend their homeland.

September 18, 1945

I am discharged from the Navy on "points" and now I go to college. The togetherness of it all disperses. We all re-focus. It's soccer, baseball -- it's our first baby, and Economic classes. Barbara and I know family joy, and the happiness of being at school and looking forward shortly thereafter to a new

*explain
?*

life in our west. We have lots of new friends. The letters from the shipmates slow down. They are finding their new way too.

January 20, 1989

I am sworn in as President of the United States. A TBF on a float goes by in our Inaugural parade. On it are some squadron mates from VT 51 and a couple of old submariners who were aboard Finback when she picked me out of the drink off Chi Chi Jima. They are smiling and waving ~~and~~ ^{no} no-one knows who they are. But I knew.

February 1989

day?

I ^{am in} ~~go to~~ Japan for the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. It is an icy cold day and the long ceremony is beautifully done. Sitting there in the cold, surrounded by World leaders, I had time to think. Yes, I thought about the ~~Burst~~ ^{Burst} of anti-aircraft fire from Chi Chi Jima that killed my friends, but that thought did not dominate. I thought about Hirohito going to call on MacArthur, about Japan's remarkable recovery and about her democracy. I thought about the quiet little man and his love of nature and how that contrasted with the pictures ^{we} saw 45 years ^a go. . . I thought of Japan. Our alliance is strong, our friendship is genuine. They are not ^w a democracy. How remarkable that is. Maybe Ted White, Jack Delaney, and Jim Wykes did not die in vain. It was

[I thought of forgiveness?]

right that I went back to Japan to the Emperor's funeral. I didn't see the raised swords. I saw a new Emperor -- a respected figure in a country that is our friend.

#

Have discussed w/ Life -
out. in coming in its entirety.
& we support.

Wld like to send Life

Working Draft soon.

Have ind. minor grammatical
edits. Have added two lines

bracketed on pp. —. which
would clarify ^{you} ~~the~~ paragraph.

Copy has been seen by
HS - ^{suggested} ~~to~~ ^{change} down H. reference
which we have done.

If comfortable, wld send
to Life or working draft

WORKING DRAFT**January 20, 1989**

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