



“LEST WE FORGET: THE MISSION”

An Opportunity to **HONOR**
and **PRESERVE**

Update #7:

September 10, 2015

**A Monumental Bronze Sculpture
in Memory of the 88,000 WWII US Airman
Killed in Action**

An extraordinary project by

**Maj. Fredric Arnold (ret.), 93 years old and the
Sole Surviving Member of his
WWII P-38 Class of 42J Group**

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About Lest We Forget: The Mission

Of fourteen original members of their WWII Group from the Class of 42J P-38 fighter pilots, only two survived combat: Fredric Arnold and Jim Hagenback.

Much of their survival was due to luck. Years later, they vowed to each other that whoever was left standing would do something to honor the twelve. *Lest We Forget: The Mission* stemmed from their deep gratitude to the twelve original members of their Group that didn't survive to live their lives in peace.

Now at the age of 93, Fredric Arnold is the last man standing and he is honor bound to fulfill his oath. To our knowledge, Maj. Arnold was the only commercial artist to live through combat as a WWII fighter pilot in his theater of operation. Turning to his art, the idea of the sculpture grew out of an intense memory of the quiet bravery of his comrades attending a mission briefing as they recommitted to executing the day's mission, even while flanked by the memory of pilots killed in recent combat.

Although the sculpture began as a testament to the twelve pilots in his squadron, the scope of the work has grown. Now the twelve individuals figures are dedicated to the memory of all 88,000 U.S. aviators who gave their lives during WWII.

An agreement is in place to exhibit *Lest We Forget: The Mission* at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. In time, we hope it becomes an iconic image linked to WWII aviators just as the famous Iwo Jima sculpture memorializes the sacrifices borne serves to memorialize the Marines.

The photo shown at the right is the original tabletop version of the work. The sculpture depicts twelve life-sized fighter pilots during a mission briefing. The lighter colored spirits of aviators already killed in action look over the shoulders of those still alive. All are destined to die.

During much of the war, the death rate among fighter pilots was so high that, statistically, it was a certainty



that none would survive 50 missions to come home. In spite of that knowledge, each pilot made the conscious decision to board their aircraft and leave the safety of their home base to fly toward the battle. Day after day.

This sculpture captures a poignant moment in time when the mission is laid before the squadron and each pilot recommits himself to go again, even as they feel the presence of pilots already killed and not yet gone or forgotten. In truth, it was a harrowing real life example of Russian Roulette.

* * * * *

This update is sent via email periodically to keep our friends and supporters up to date. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please send an email with your request to Marc.Arnold@LestWeForgetSculpture.org

Excitement for the project is growing rapidly. At times, it seems the sculpture is taking on a life of its own and we are just along for the ride! Many people have asked how they can help. Thank you for your interest and good wishes. We now have a mechanism to accommodate your offers of support. See the “You Can Help” article in this Update. For additional information, please visit the project website shown below.

On a personal note, I couldn't be more proud of my Dad and his work. His energy, optimism and enthusiasm never cease to amaze and inspire me. Seeing him conceive of, then finish all twelve life-size sculptures in clay has been an inspiration. With his part mostly complete, the challenge is to get the finished sculpture cast and installed as soon as possible. Depending on the support we receive, the sculpture may even be completed before Dad's 94th birthday in January 2016!

From all of us committed to the successful completion of this project, thank you for your ongoing interest and enthusiastic support.

Marc Arnold, Steering Committee

All Twelve Figures Complete in Clay

The last Update was published in October, 2014. At that time, Maj. Arnold had completed seven of the twelve full size clay sculptures that would ultimately comprise the complete sculpture. Working with a talented assistant, they were on track to complete the remaining five figures by June, 2015. [Read more....](#) Being a healthy 92 at the time, no one could ignore the risk of something happening before completion of all twelve clay originals, a critical milestone in the project. We all held our breath hoping he would be able to finish.

Lo and behold, they put the pedal to metal and finished the twelfth sculpture in April, 2015, two months ahead of schedule. Whew! This is a huge milestone. Maj. Arnold will be closely involved as the many steps are taken to mold, cast, weld, finish, patina, assemble, deliver and install the sculpture. Nevertheless, the talented people at the foundry will be able to complete the project even if, ahem, something happens to Maj. Arnold. With the completion of the twelfth figure in clay, his creative input is complete.

You are invited to visit the project website to multiple high-resolution views of all twelve figures. In the meantime, here is a peek at figures eight through twelve, along with the artist's commentary about the significance of each:

Figure Eight: Lonesome

Hollywood movies rarely depict the mayhem of actual combat. In spite of training, planning and standard operating procedures, more often than not, WWII battles did not go according to plan. The terror of fighting for survival was often at odds with the precise skills necessary to successfully accomplish the mission. In the air, fighter pilots were called upon to fly in close formation while corkscrewing through intense air combat maneuvers. Often subjected to bitterly cold temperatures, high “G” forces and enemy fire, they had to stay close to combine their firepower on the enemy... yet staying close brought its own danger of mid-air collision.

Keeping your cool while flying a high performance fighter to the very limits of its performance envelope, while simultaneously being a target of ground and airborne enemy fire is a challenge we can scarcely imagine today.

As Maj. Arnold (Ret.) recalls, “At times it was like trying to thread a needle while riding a roller coaster... oh, yeah... and the guy in the car behind you is shooting at you!”

Dressed as he would have been at the controls of his WWII fighter, LONESOME represents the spirit of an airman killed during the war. He did not fall to enemy fire, however. During the chaos of air combat, he lost focus for an instant and inadvertently turned his plane into the plane piloted by his element leader. The propellers of his own P-38 sliced off the tailbooms of his leader’s plane and they both perished in the resulting mid-air collision. So in addition to the loss of his own life, he carries the burden of taking the life of his comrade.



Figure Nine: Tailend Charlie

“Tailend Charlie” was a term given to the last airplane in a formation of military aircraft. This position was the highest risk and was often occupied by the newest members of the squadron.

As a pilot survived missions, his position moved forward as he assumed more responsibility for leading an element, a flight and ultimately the squadron.

TAILEND CHARLIE represents a newer member of the squadron killed. Fighters were called upon to perform many different types of missions. Dressed as he was when he died, the absence of an oxygen mask signifies they were flying on a low level mission.

TAILEND CHARLIE represents the many pilots that did their very best to learn as fast as possible, but were nonetheless ‘behind the learning curve’.

We can sympathize with TAILEND CHARLIE. After limited training and no prior exposure to combat, he found himself skimming along at 400 mph at treetop height, trying to follow his element leader while strafing ground targets that withered under the combined firepower of his squadron’s guns. His expression conveys utter astonishment at this personal introduction to war. And in the midst of his confusion and sensory overload, ground fire penetrated his cockpit, mortally wounding him. Alone in the cockpit, he passed into unconsciousness and the plane crashed. He never advanced past “Tailend Charlie”.



Figure Ten: STUD

New tactics in WWII aerial combat replaced the popular concept chivalrous one-on-one struggles as seen in WWI. The mission of high altitude bomber escort, for example, only came about during WWII. Getting large, more vulnerable four engine bombers to their target and home became a priority. This required coordinated flight of the entire squadron to bring defensive firepower onto opposing fighters.

The discipline required to fight while staying in close formation was a demanding skill that often had to be learned in actual combat. STUD, the element leader, and his less experienced wingman, LONESOME, were attempting to stay with the squadron as it corkscrewed through the air at high altitude, fending off Messerschmitt ME-109 attacks on a flight of B-17 bombers.

Simultaneously maintaining visual contact with the bombers, the attacking squadron of enemy fighters and their own squadron proved to be too much for LONESOME. His momentary loss of concentration resulted in a mid-air collision with his own element leader.

With his tail booms cut off, STUD's plane entered a violent spin. Even though he was uninjured by the initial collision, STUD could not escape from the cockpit as the plane plummeted out of control into the ground. The horrifying fall from 30,000 feet took almost five minutes.

STUD, with his hand on LONESOME's shoulder, comforts his wingman, knowing the mistake that caused their deaths was a result of the overall chaos around them.



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Figure Eleven: SPEED

Unlike air-to-air combat of WWI, fighter pilots of WWII were often called upon to precisely coordinate their flights to attack targets or rendezvous with other flights of fighters or bombers at specific times and places. Choreographing these complex battle plans required timing to the minute, which depended on synchronizing each pilot's mechanical wind-up wristwatch during the mission briefing. SPEED glances at his watch, verifying its accuracy.

"Lest We Forget: The Mission" briefing scene takes place before sunrise. The briefing ensures all pilots in the squadron have the essential details of the mission. Once dismissed, the pilots will make their way to their waiting aircraft where ground crew have armed, fueled, warmed up and checked their planes. They will sit in their darkened cockpits, strapped into their parachute and seat harnesses, quietly waiting until the specified time to start their engines. Then the squadron will line up and takeoff at a precise time. Initially climbing in dawn light, they will be far from their base as the sun rises above the horizon.

Bomber escort missions required two or more squadrons of bombers and fighters to takeoff from different air bases, sometimes hundreds of miles apart, then fly on intercept courses to rendezvous on the way to the enemy target. Modern aviation depends on computers, satellites and advance flight control systems. SPEED reminds us success in the time of WWII depended on synchronization of the lowly wristwatches worn by these pilots.

Mistakes that caused others to die often provided important lessons for those still alive. The close proximity of SPEED and his fallen comrade reinforces the intimate connection between the living and the dead. They were traveling the same path of dedication and sacrifice, one only slight ahead of the other.



Figure Twelve: HANDSOME

Late in the war, the U.S. achieved air superiority in each of the combat theaters. Although much fighting remained, actions were imbued with a degree of confidence that was largely absent earlier in the war. HANDSOME will die like all the other pilots in this sculpture, but that will not happen for several more missions. He is shown here with a casual posture, a cup of coffee and saddle oxford street shoes. He embodies the growing sense of confidence that the allies will prevail.

On lower altitude missions, pilots commonly flew in standard street shoes of the day. For high altitude flights, where the outside temperature was bitterly cold and cockpit heaters were insufficient, insulated over boots helped retain warmth.

The cup of coffee is used in the artwork to help convey his confidence, but its presence is actually somewhat out of place at a mission briefing. “We hardly ever drank before a mission,” Arnold recalls. “The urinal systems in those days were primitive, at best. The last thing you’d want is to deal with peeing during a combat mission!”



Project Endorsements from the Top

As the project gains exposure, we are astounded by the strong support coming from all directions. We get letters and emails from people in all corners of the world in support of the program. Of all these endorsements in recent months, however, two stood out from the rest:

ENDORSEMENT FROM THREE FORMER CHAIRMEN OF THE JOINT CHIEF OF STAFFS

“Fredric Arnold is truly a national treasure, both as a Fighter pilot of WWII who survived 50 combat missions and as a talented sculptor. His 'Lest We Forget: The Mission' sculpture will be an important national monument to the Aviators of WWII. Now is the time to step up and memorialize the 88,000 Airmen who gave their all. I fully support the deep significance of this work which conveys the quiet courage of the young airmen who fought in the skies of WWII -- those to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude.”



General Colin Powell
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
1989-1993

General Richard Myers
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
2001-2005

General Peter Pace
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
2005-2007

ENDORSEMENT FROM FORMER SENATOR BOB DOLE

“Much more than art, this sculpture conveys an important message to our fellow Americans – a message about the determination and sacrifices exhibited by a generation, crafted by one who was actually there on the battle lines. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those men and women who bravely stepped up to the challenge of WWII – 88,000 Airmen made the ultimate sacrifice, and their heroism will never be forgotten.” –

Senator Bob Dole
WWII Combat Veteran
Former National Chairman WWII Memorial

You Can Help

To cast, assemble and ship the monumental twelve figure bronze sculpture will require the combined contribution of \$672,000. As this appeal begins, more than 20 people have pledged amounts totaling more than \$100,000. This is a good beginning, but a successful campaign requires others to step forward with donations.

All the figures are now complete in clay. To finish the sculpture in bronze, however, we need your financial support and urgently request that your support come as soon as possible so the project can be completed promptly enabling Fredric Arnold to attend and play a role in the finished sculpture's dedication ceremony.

Exhibited at The National World War II Museum, this remarkable sculpture by a WWII veteran combat pilot will help educate the public and ensure that future generations do not forget or minimize the sacrifices that were made to protect our freedoms. In time, we believe "Lest We Forget: The Mission" will become an iconic image of WWII aviators just as famous as the monument of the Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima. Its message will be felt by millions of future museum visitors.

Project Fund Established

Many people have asked whether they could make a contribution toward completion of the sculpture project. Until now, the project had no means to accept tax-deductible donations. Now there is.

'Lest We Forget Sculptures' is a restricted fund administered by The Foundation For Radiance, a California not-for-profit serving as a Fiscal Sponsor of the sculpture project in accordance with IRS 501c3 rules and regulations. All donations to this fund will be earmarked and solely used for the benefit of the Lest We Forget sculpture project.

Donations may be made by check, payable to "Lest We Forget Sculptures" and mailed to:

Lest We Forget Sculptures
1630a 30th St., #173
Boulder, CO 80301

We gratefully thank you in advance for your support.

Exhibition Venue: National WWII Museum, New Orleans

Work on the sculpture began in 2004, long before a public display venue had been selected.

After considering numerous possible venues, the choice was made in favor of The National WWII Museum, located in New Orleans. Founded by historian and author, Stephen Ambrose, the Museum tells the story of the American Experience in *the war that changed the world* — why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today.



National WWII Museum Expansion

Dr. Nick Mueller, the museum's CEO, recognized the close fit between the message of the sculpture and their institutional goals. A dialogue culminated in execution of documents September 25th 2014. We couldn't be happier with this outcome and are thrilled the piece is destined to touch the hearts and minds of museum visitors.



National WWII Museum Inner Courtyard

Congress officially designated the museum as America's National WWII Museum. The National WWII Museum is a private 501c3 corporation. Learn more about the museum at www.NationalWW2Museum.org

Gallery Exhibition Now Open

If you find yourself in the Boulder area, you are invited to visit a gallery exhibition in the home of Major Arnold. We currently organize a weekly event for up to ten people per session on most Saturdays. We can also arrange a personal visit by appointment. It can be just an informal visit or it could be set up along the lines of how we entertain the weekly sessions. The agenda for group visits includes the following:

1:00 DOCUMENTARY “BETWEEN TWO WORLDS”

1:40 VIDEO: “LEST WE FORGET: THE INSPIRATION”

2:00 GALLERY VIEWING AND DISCUSSION WITH MAJOR ARNOLD (ret.)

From the Exhibition Catalogue: Fredric Arnold: A 90 Year Retrospective

Drawing from an early age, Fredric Arnold’s body of artwork stretches nine decades of two and three dimensional art.

During that time, he explored many styles and media. Classical representation of the human form. Cubism in the style of Léger. Commissioned portraiture. Ink and wash. Conté. Charcoal. Watercolor. Chalk. Pencil. Papier-mâché. Acrylic. Large (50+ foot) sand sculptures. Cartoon. Stone. Bronze. Large building-sized murals.

When asked how he could create art using so many different materials and methods, he says, “99% of art is seeing... if you can truly see, creating the artwork is the simple part.”

The 21 pieces on display include pre-war, post-war and current works.



To arrange your visit, email: Marc.Arnold@LestWeForgetSculpture.org

Acknowledgements

People always ask me whether, at 93, I can do a project this big all by myself. I answer: NO WAY! Regardless of age, it takes a team of people to create life size bronze sculptures. I can't even imagine a solo artist doing the entire process single handedly. I am extremely grateful to the wonderful people helping me get this project done. Here is a partial list of the people involved behind the scenes to make *Lest We Forget: The Mission* become a reality:

Marc Arnold and Dana Schwartz: My son and daughter are involved in every aspect of organizing this project. Their invaluable help allows me to focus much more of my attention on the art.

Sutton Betti: Each of the original life size figures is sculpted in about 250 pounds of clay. At my age, it simply isn't feasible to work at 1:1 scale. An accomplished sculptor in his own right, Sutton fabricates the armature, blocks each figure, captures each pose, then we work through the details to completion. We work together closely, collaborating in person and by FaceTime video conferencing. We have boundless respect for each other and enjoy working together. I am deeply indebted to Sutton for his vital help.

Steve Vontolos: We entrust the precious clay original to Steve for mold making. He carefully applies latex and plaster to capture every detail. Once hard, the mold is removed, destroying the clay original. Definitely a high stakes process!

Tony Workman and Jeanne Toussaint: Art Castings is among the best fine art foundries in the world. While they produce a large variety and large volume of wonderful bronze sculptures, Tony and Jeanne have taken a personal interest in my project from the very beginning. Dozens of highly talented people in their organization perform critical functions to execute the lost wax casting process, including: Wax Casting, Wax Detailing, Sprues and Gates, Ceramic Mold, De-Waxing, Pouring the Bronze, Sandblasting, Welding, Chasing, Patina.

Most of all, I thank **Natalie, my dear wife of 69 (!) years**. As with all my projects over the years, she puts up with my single-minded obsession as my attention wanders 24/7 as I think about the various details and challenges 24/7. None of my large projects would have come to fruition if it weren't for her love and support.

Fredric Arnold
August 2015

Photo Gallery



Figure Three: Lucky Strike (Clay)



Figure Five: Eager Beaver (Clay)



Figure Two: Squadron Leader (Clay)



Figure One: Teenager (Clay)



Figure Four: Good Lookin' (Clay)



Collaborating with Sutton Betti
"Sutton is wonderful. We make a great team."



Maj. Arnold with Lucky Strike
"We all smoked back then."



Standing with Squadron Leader (bronze)
"I was taller back then... ha, ha!"