



Together in Scripture Reading:
This month: the book of Psalms

Colonel Steve Martin

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CAVU

Sitting by the sea, an old man thinks back over the course of his life - one unique in the annals of history. He has lived a full life - loved and respected by many. He watches the rhythm of the sea with seagulls floating by on the ocean breeze. This is his favorite place in the world, out by the ocean. It's peaceful and scenic and he thinks back over his life. He notices a small plaque he had placed at this very spot years ago. Once it was a motivational symbol, pointing to future possibilities; now it's mostly a reminder of achievement gained, and a life well lived. CAVU are the lone letters on this plaque and it stands for Ceiling and Visibility Unlimited - perfect flying conditions. He thinks back to years ago and his time as a Navy pilot and how CAVU seemed to be a common link between his military training and the long life he has lived in the years since. He is almost never alone these days; it goes with the territory of being a former President of the United States; but CAVU brings back one strong memory of being completely and desperately alone. George Herbert Walker Bush, Forty-One as he is known, thinks back to a morning many, many years ago. CAVU....



George H.W. Bush (c. 1941)

lic service and he wanted to do his part for his country. At 18 years old, much to his parent's chagrin, Bush became the youngest naval aviator and was sent to the Pacific. His parents thought he was too young, and though tall, very skinny. He entered flight training to be a carrier pilot specializing as a torpedo bomber.

CAVU - perfect flying conditions. That was the note on the mission board as the pilots had been briefed about their upcoming mission on the morning of September 2, 1944. At 7:15 am, Lieutenant

Junior Grade (LTJG) George Bush was sitting in the cockpit of his TBM-1C Avenger waiting to lift off the deck of the *USS San Jacinto*. Also occupying his aircraft was LTJG Ted White and Radioman Second Class John Delaney. White, a good friend to Bush, volunteered and was approved to join the mission in Bush's plane as the tail gunner. Their mission would take them to the Japanese held island of Chichi Jima to bomb a critical Japanese communications site. Chichi Jima was a key strategic stronghold of the Bonin Islands (30 islands) 540 nautical miles from Tokyo, Japan. The island provided support for the other Bonin Islands and its two communications sites atop two mountains were key surveillance points for the Japanese Navy. Bush and his fellow aviators were a part of Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58 responsible for eliminating Japanese resistance in preparation for the invasion of Iwo Jima in February 1945.

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MILITARY TERMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS

marking: To maintain contact on a target from such a position that the marking unit has an immediate offensive capability.

master: The commanding officer of a US Naval Ship, a commercial ship, or a government-owned general agency agreement ship operated for the Military Sealift Command to transport DOD cargo.

Pray for our Military Family:

- ◆ **Chaplain Brian Palmer and Family** - US Army, serving the Lord in Fort Hood, TX
- ◆ **Merry Dare Goodwin** - US Navy, serving aboard the *USS Decatur*
- ◆ **Justin & Kimberly Reece** - US Air Force, stationed at Pensacola NAS
- ◆ **Timothy & Hope Robinson** - USMC, stationed at Camp LeJeune, NC
- ◆ **Sgt Aaron David de Serres** - USMC, deployed in the Middle East

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Romans 11:33



CAVU

At 8:00 am, Bush, along with three TBM-1C "Avengers" (depicted at right) from the USS Jacinto and four F6F-3 "Hellcats" from the USS Enterprise, began their bombing run on the communications facilities at Chichi Jima. As then President Bush recalled many years later, they encountered heavy flak. Just as Bush was releasing his four 500 lb. bombs, his plane was hit by flak. He then saw flames on the wing of his aircraft; he turned the plane back toward the ocean hoping to be able to get it back to the San Jacinto. Once out over the ocean he noticed that the flames were nearing his fuel tank and he knew that they only had a few moments before the fuel ignited. He radioed back to White and Delaney, "hit the silk" meaning parachute from the plane. He turned the plane so that the wind wouldn't hinder White and Delaney from egressing from the rear of the plane. He then ejected the canopy and stepped out on the wing. He pulled his ripcord as he was leaving the plane (too early) and the parachute caught on the tail of the plane ripping out some of the panels in the parachute. In the process his head hit one of the rear elevators of the plane causing a nasty gash in his head.

"The tides were pushing the raft toward Chichi Jima and the Japanese who would be merciless to a pilot that had just bombed them."

After a moment, his parachute untangled from the tail of the aircraft and he parachuted to the ocean, although at a higher speed than normal due to the missing panels.

When Bush hit the water, he swam to the raft that had also ejected from the plane. As he entered the raft, he noticed that the raft paddles had become detached in the fall and were not with the raft. He would later find that his fresh water supply also became detached and was lost. He immediately began his search for White and Delaney. Later he would learn that only one was able to leave the plane and that parachute did not open before hitting the water. Both crewmen were killed.

Flying overhead were three of Bush's wingmen, Lieutenant Doug West, Lieutenant Milt Moore, and Commander Don Melvin. West spotted Bush in the raft and noticed that he was bleeding. One of his crewmen dropped a medical kit that Bush retrieved. LT Moore noticed that a Japanese gunboat had also spotted Bush and was heading toward his position. Both West and Moore strafed the



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gunboat until it left the scene. Commander Melvin radioed a pre-arranged dis-

tress call that he had a pilot in the water and the pilots stayed overhead until they were getting low on fuel.

Once the planes had to depart, Bush was now completely alone in the ocean. Bush later recalled that he was "sick to his stomach, injured, concerned about his crewmen and scared." He said he thought of his parents, prayed and looked for his lost crewmen. The tides were pushing the raft toward Chichi Jima and the Japanese who would be merciless to a pilot that had just bombed them. He sat in the raft, at the mercy of the sea - with no friends, no supplies, and hopelessly alone. At 11:56 am, Bush saw a periscope come up out of the water. He was afraid that he was about to be captured by a Japanese submarine. A few minutes later, the submarine USS Finback pulled alongside Bush and pulled him from the water. He had been in the water for well over three hours when rescued.

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Proposed New VA Dental Benefit

A proposed Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pilot program would help all veterans access free or discounted dental services in their local communities. Currently, VA only provides dental care to veterans who have a service-related dental problem, are former POWs or are rated as totally disabled as a result of their military service. Under this current law, only about 8% of veterans are eligible for dental care from the VA.

In 2014, in an effort to help offer more dental care for veterans, the VA partnered with private insurers to

by military.com author Jim Absher

offer a reduced rate on dental insurance through their VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP). VADIP, however, is scheduled to end in 2021 and is only available to veterans enrolled in VA healthcare or families enrolled in CHAMPVA.

As of late 2019, according to a notice published in the Federal Register, VA wants to begin an at least five year long pilot program that would connect veterans with dentists in their area who offer free or discounted dental care to all veterans -- not just those with a service-connected disability.

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Winter Safety Tips (part 1)

Winter can be a hazardous time of year. Frigid temperatures and slick roads can be dangerous. Being prepared and knowing your TRICARE health care options will help you and your family remain safe this winter. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide a number of winter safety tips to help you prepare for freezing temperatures, and prevent injuries and illness. When it comes to preparing your home, car, and family during the winter months, follow these tips.

Prepare with TRICARE

It's a good idea to have a health emergency kit with all your TRICARE essentials. If you have chronic conditions,



Article by health.mil staff

your kit should include a full list of your prescription and over-the-counter medications with dosing instructions. Don't forget to include contact information for TRICARE, your primary care provider, and an extra supply of drugs and supplies.

If you need medical care after a weather-related illness or injury, TRICARE covers urgent and emergency care. But be sure to follow the rules for your plan for getting care. If you're not sure of the type of care you need, the Military Health System Nurse Advice Line is available 24/7 to provide health advice.

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

Hundreds of local military veterans were set to celebrate Valentine's Day with messages of thanks from the students of Kings Highway Elementary School in Westport, CT. They used their artistic talents to create Valentine cards with lots of construction paper hearts and heart-filled words of thanks for the veterans' bravery and sacrifice.

U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, D-4, visited the school to talk with students in several classrooms about the role of the military and to help make the cards for his third annual Valentines for Veterans project. He left the school with two large boxes of about 200 Valentine's Day cards, which he was scheduled to deliver Tuesday to veterans at the VFW Post 399 in the Saugatuck section of town and the Veterans Administration Hospital in West Haven.

"They're a pretty special group of people," Himes told fourth-graders and the kindergartners who had been paired with them for the art project. "They take risks and they are proud to serve the country and wear the uniform," he said.

Most of the students used red, pink and lavender hearts to decorate their cards. Others drew their hearts and penned messages inside them. "I can't help but say thank you for all you do," one fourth-grader wrote on her card. "Thank you for risking your life for ours," wrote Charlotte Foege, a fourth-grader. One enterprising fourth-grader, Peter Alaimo, drew an American flag on his Valentine and pasted pink hearts in the place of the stars. Fourth-grader Lia Chen placed rows of pink hearts in the stripes of her flag.



"This is a really special thing you're doing," Himes told the children. "It reminds them that you're thinking of them." He said it is especially important to think of them as

various conflicts wind down. "When we had hundreds of thousands of people deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan it was top of mind," Himes said. There is less attention on them now, he said.

Himes asked the students to remember veterans throughout the year, not just on Valentine's Day. "When

they get care packages -- magazines, candy, shampoo, it really means a lot to them," Himes said.

For more info, visit www.westport-news.org

CAVU

The *USS Finback* had been on life-guard duty to pick up anyone who had to bail out over the ocean. They had picked up the call from Commander Melvin and immediately proceeded to his location. The waters around Chichi Jima were heavily mined, so the *Finback* had to proceed with caution. Because they were on combat patrols, Bush had to stay with them for 30 days. He soon found out that he was not out of the woods yet. During that time the *USS Finback* endured two separate depth chargings by Japanese destroyers. Later Bush recalled; "I just had to sit there and be still. That experience was far scarier than an airplane bombing run. At least in a plane you controlled your destiny to



some extent. You could see puffs of smoke coming at you, and you knew what the problem was. But there, under water, all you could do was hope that the enemy wouldn't put an explosive on top of you. The real submariners weren't worried about it; they'd been through it all before. But for me, there was a certain helplessness. Having no assigned duty made it even worse - waiting for one explosion and then the next. There were times when it felt as though the sub would shake apart. I felt trapped and scared - far more scared than I was being shot at in my plane."

LTJG Bush returned to the *USS San Jacinto* eight weeks after being shot

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down. There were nine crewmen who initially survived being shot down in the attack on Chichi Jima. Only Bush ultimately survived. The other eight were captured by the Japanese - tortured, executed and their bodies cannibalized. Throughout the war, Bush flew 58 combat missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The remainder of his life was unparalleled, having served as a Texas congressman, Ambassador to the United Nations, U.S. Liaison to China, Director of the CIA, Vice-President to Ronald Reagan, and finally, as the forty-first President of the United States.

One can only guess what our history would have looked like had he not survived the bombing run on Chichi Jima. His near-death experience profoundly shaped the rest of his life.

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Did You Know: Origins of Navy Terminology (Part 8)

www.navy.mil

Editor's Note: Continuing with part 8

S.O.S.

Contrary to popular notion, the letters S.O.S. do not stand for "Save Our Ship" or "Save Our Souls". They were selected to indicate a distress because, in Morse code, these letters and their combination create an unmistakable sound pattern.

Splice the Mainbrace

In the age of sail, ship's rigging was a favorite target during sea battles because destroying the opponent's ability to maneuver or get away would put you at obvious advantage. Therefore, the first and most important task after a battle was to repair damaged



rigging (also known as lines- but never "rope"!). Examples of lines include braces (lines that adjust the angle at which a sail is set in relation to the wind) and stays (lines supporting the masts).

The mainbrace was the principal line controlling the rotation of the main sail. Splicing this line was one of the most difficult chores aboard ship, and one on which the ship's safety depended. It was the custom, after the main brace was properly spliced, to serve grog to the entire crew. Thus, today, after a hard day (or, not so hard day), the phrase has become an invitation to have a drink.

Starboard

The Vikings called the side of their ship its board, and they placed the steering oar, the "star" on the right side of the ship, thus that side became known as the "star board." It's been that way ever since. And, because the oar was in the right side, the ship was tied to the dock at the left side. This was known as the loading side or "larboard". Later, it was decided that "larboard" and "starboard" were too similar, especially when trying to be heard over the roar of a heavy sea, so the phrase became the "side at which you tied up to in port" or the "port" side.

TO BE CONCLUDED
NEXT MONTH

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

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FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

- Robert Carver - 3
- Rose Wilson - 6
- Vickie Salerno - 14
- Redgie Chambers - 15
- Andrew Folz - 27

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES:

- Albert & Becky Watkins - 14



Happy Valentine's Day

THIS MONTH IN MILITARY HISTORY:

1 Feb 1915 - The government of Germany agrees to permit an unrestricted submarine warfare campaign. Ships, even those of neutral countries, can now be sunk without warning. On 4 February the Germans announce a submarine

blockade of Great Britain to begin on the 18th. All vessels bound for Britain are deemed legitimate targets.

29 Feb 1864 - Lt. William B. Cushing of the Union Army led a

landing party from the *USS Monticello* to Smithville, NC, in an attempt to capture Confederate Brig. Gen. Louis Hebert, only to discover that Hebert and his men had already moved on Wilmington.

CAVU

He later related in an interview that he often wondered why he was saved, and the others died. He said, "the Lord moves in mysterious ways and we don't know why He acts as He does. We must have faith and move on with our lives. CAVU (ceiling and visibility unlimited) became the motto of his life and the way he approached each day.

In Romans chapter 11, the Apostle Paul tells us: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever." God has a plan for each of us even though it is often impossible to understand. Much like a puzzle being put together, we see only the pieces, God sees the whole picture.

I close with a poem written by William Cowper in 1774 - "God Moves in a Mysterious Way":

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*God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs and works His sov'reign will.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flow'r.
Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.*



Proposed New VA Dental Benefit

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The VA says it would create a website where veterans can find participating dentists. The veteran would then make an appointment and be responsible for any charges. The VA may coordinate care and make recommendations for civilian dentists under the proposed plan, but they would not provide any additional dental services or expand existing eligibility for dental care.

Dental care isn't cheap, and VA says they spent over \$1.1 billion offering dental care to veterans in 2018. This new program wouldn't end all VA dental care, just make it easier for all veterans to find affordable dental care in their communities.



Prayer Notes, Event Announcements

Please pray for Missionaries Brian and Ivey Palmer at Fort Hood, TX (Albert & Becky Watkins' son-in-law & daughter). They will soon be moving back to Alaska where Brian will be stepping into a position of greater authority. Congratulations!!! Remember Merry Dare Price-Goodwin (Dale & Dixie Ulmer's granddaughter; Rachel Vradenburgh's niece) serving aboard the *USS Decatur*.

Congratulations on her recent marriage to Noah Price. Pray for Justin & Kimberly Reece (Dan & Becky Reece's son & daughter-in-law) stationed at Pensacola.

Please keep Don Small, Bob Perry, and Redgie Chambers in your prayers. Each are recovering from recent illnesses.

If you know of anyone who is a Veteran that I've missed in the Prayer Notes, please let me know so that I can add them to our prayer list.

- Colonel Martin

Coming Up Next Month:

- Winter Safety Tips (part 2)
- Origins of Navy Terminology (concl)
- Should you borrow from your 401K?



The Brian Palmer Family

