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WORLD WAR II VETERANS DISCUSSION GROUP
HAGAMAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY 203-468-3890
227 MAIN ST. EAST HAVEN, CT 06512



March 2014

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 26th at 2:00 pm in the Hagaman Library DeMayo Community Room.

This month, we will have a very rich and interesting talk by Nina Garrett, born to Dutch parents who emigrated from Holland in the late 1930s, while the rest of their family remained to suffer the Nazi occupation. After the Germans occupied Holland no communication was possible for more than five years except for one or two letters that made it through thanks to the Red Cross. In September 1944, her grandfather in Amsterdam began a letter to her father (then living in Bristol, CT) with the assumption that the Allies were about to take the Rhine bridge at Arnhem and proceed to liberate Holland, but that didn't happen, as depicted in the book and movie A Bridge Too Far. Her grandfather kept writing once or twice a week until May 1945, when the Canadians finally got to Amsterdam and he could entrust the letter -- by then close to 23,000 words -- to a soldier to post. Nina will talk about and read excerpts from this war journal of the Hunger Winter.

Nina will also talk briefly about her yearlong stay in post-WWII Vienna, Austria (1960-61), and the experience of learning about the country's occupation by the four Allied powers, where Austria was divided up exactly as was Germany. Vienna, like Berlin, was in the Russian sector, and both the country and the city were occupied until 1955, just five years before she was there.

Finally, Nina will talk briefly about her uncle, who was a Dutch railroad administrator in Indonesia during WWII. He and his family were taken prisoner by the Japanese, and he was sent to the infamous concentration camp in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, on the River Kwai, to work on the railroad line that the Japanese needed built between Bangkok and Rangoon. (This was the camp made infamous by the almost completely fictional film Bridge on the River Kwai.) Her uncle survived, although his wife did not, and his efforts in the camp earned him considerable fame. Nina will clarify actual history from the Hollywood depiction of the camp.

"I wake up every morning at nine and grab for the morning paper. Then I look at the obituary page. If my name is not on it, I get up." Benjamin Franklin



Nina Garrett

Our speaker this month, Nina Broekhuysen Garrett was born in Bristol CT and grew up in Branford. She majored in French and German at Bryn Mawr College, studied in Vienna on a Rotary Foundation Fellowship, and took a Master of Arts in Teaching degree in German and French from Yale. Her career focused on the teaching of foreign languages, the theory of language acquisition, the use of technology in language teaching and language acquisition research, and the professional development of language teachers. She was the founding director of the Yale Center for Language Study until she retired in 2008. She lives in Old Saybrook.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Richard Kross 3/1
Rudolph Pohlman 3/12
Steve Fleck 3/27
Eileen Waldron 3/29

Need help paying grocery and other bills?
Are you 60 plus, a war veteran or disabled? Free Benefits QuickLINK screening appointments are available at the Hagaman Library on the first Tuesday of every month between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. You may call the Hagaman Library at 203 468-3890 to schedule your half hour screening appointment.

SONGS WE'LL SING IN MARCH

ANCHORS AWEIGH
WILD BLUE YONDER
YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW
COAST GUARD MARCHING SONG
MARINE CORPS HYMN

GEM OF THE MONTH:

"You have passed the true test of maturity when keeping a secret gives you more satisfaction than passing it along."

FAWN'S VACATION REPORT

Last month, Fawn was away and could not attend the WWII meeting. She and her husband Gerry had a nice vacation at North Carolina's Outer Banks, Kill Devil Hills, visiting Jill and her husband, Wade. You may remember Jill (Cete) Reid, US Coast Guard petty officer who used to volunteer for our WWII group until she was transferred out of New Haven. *** **FAWN HAS A FULL REPORT:** ***



Jockey's Ridge Sand Dunes

We saw large Jockey's Ridge sand dunes, the tallest natural sand dune system in the Eastern United States. They also took us to see the historical Bodie Island Lighthouse, built in 1872.

We went to search for the free-roaming Corolla Mustang horses, in the nearby Corolla area. We only saw a garter snake and Whitetail deer, but it was fun riding in Wade's truck on the beach! We got stuck at one point, but some guys came along and dug us out. We saw dolphins in the ocean from where we were staying! We had some lovely meals out and enjoyed our stay!



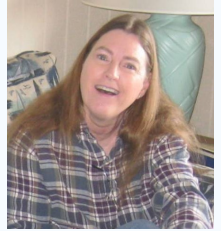
Stuck in the sand!



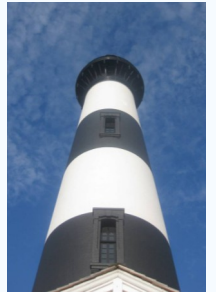
Outer Banks Seashore



Dining out!



Jill



Bodie Island Lighthouse



Our Own WWII Group Member Steve Dougherty on the P-61



Steve Dougherty

The P-61 "Black Widow" was a two seat version of the earlier P-38 "Lightning." Equipped with radar and an impressive array of armament, it proved itself to be a superior night fighter in Europe and the Pacific. During the mission to rescue Allied P.O.W.s from Cabanatuan Prison Camp, Philippines, a P-61 was deployed to act as a diversion, startling the Japanese guards and allowing the 6th Ranger Battalion companies to advance across open ground unnoticed. The P.O.W.s later remarked about its design and maneuverability, likening it to "Buck Rogers" and "The War of the Worlds." During the escape to American lines, the "Black Cat" Squadron of ten P-61s protected the fleeing caravan by engaging and destroying Japanese tanks and troop carriers.



Northrop P-61 "Black Widow"

LAST MONTH'S MEETING:



Radivoy

Amy Radivoy, LMHC, of the Vet Center in West Haven, talked to our group about veterans' benefits. Her office can save veterans a lot of time navigating government services. And, did you know veterans can get free tickets to local sporting events? Call the Vet Center: (203) 932-9899.

Thanks to our volunteer, Julie, for all her wonderful help with setting up all the refreshments (and bringing some of her own!) at our February meeting!