

*Truman Goss B/N 416 Bomb Group by Terry Brlas*

---

STRONGSVILLE â€“ Life is all about timing. Just ask Truman Goss.

The 93-year-old resident of Royal Oak Nursing Home in Middleburg Heights served his nation admirably during World War II. When he returned to Strongsville from the war to raise a family, the thought of joining the local VFW never occurred to him or at the very least was not at the top of his to do list.

The officers of Strongsville VFW Post 3345 corrected that oversight during a ceremony at Royal Oak.

â€œIâ€™ve been waiting for this for a long time,â€ Goss said following the ceremony. â€œIâ€™m glad they invited me into it. I always had something else to do.â€

When told this was an honor Goss replied, â€œI think it is. What I did wasnâ€™t very large, but they recognized it. Iâ€™m proud.â€

VFW Post 3345 Sr. Vice Commander Tad Brown spoke about the United States entering World War II after being deliberately attacked by the Empire of Japan at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

â€œAs the war escalated so did the determination of the men and women of the United States,â€ Brown said.

Brown continued, â€œThis attack on Pearl Harbor not only reignited the American spirit, but it created what was later penned by Tom Brokaw as the â€˜Greatest Generation.â€™ Comrade Goss, you are part of the â€˜Greatest Generationâ€™ â€ As a young man of 20 you put on the uniform and trained for war. You accepted these challenges with the utmost grace and determination, and fought this war with unprecedented heroism.â€

Goss had a United States flag placed in his left hand and raised his right hand, as Brown administered the oath to become a member of VFW Post 3345.

The repeated words of â€œIn the presence of almighty God I, Truman Goss, do of my own free will solemnly promise and declare that I will bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and will always be loyal thereto. I also promise to comply and be loyal to the Congressional charter and the bylaws and rituals of this order. I will never wrong or defraud this organization nor a member thereof or permit any wrong to be done to either.

â€œI will neither propose for membership any person not eligible or any person I know to be unworthy. I will never make known to anyone not authorized to receive any work of this order should my affiliation with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States cease in any way. I will consider this pledge as binding outside the order. All of this I promise and pledge upon the honor of a true comrade and citizen of our great nation.â€

Brown then shook Gossâ€™ hand and welcomed into the fold of VFW Post 3345.

The father of Strongsville Safety Director Charles Goss and five others â€“ Corinne (deceased), Joseph, Mary, John and Martin â€“ Truman Goss grew up in Berea. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps on Sept. 29, 1942.

â€œYou could see he was moved by the words they prepared. It was great for those officers to get together and give him that special recognition,â€ Charles Goss said. â€œMy dad rarely talked about his service when we were growing up. He was our hero for the values he taught us, not for his military service.â€

Following Army Air Force Pre-flight School at the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center in 1943 and bombardier training in San Angelo, Texas in 1944, Goss was assigned to the Ninth Air Divisionâ€™s 416th Bombardment Group, 670th Bombardment Squadron in England.

Goss led 20 missions in the European Theater of operations targeting supply lines, communication centers and ordnance depots. His first mission was in A-26 43-22481.. He holds the distinction of being the first bombardier/navigator from the Ninth Air Force to attack a target in Austria. The "superior" rated hit on the railroad yards of Attang-Puchheim destroyed 350 cars, cut all rails, and workshops and warehouses were damaged.

While in the air en route to a successful bombing of an ordnance depot in Freilasing, Germany, on April 25, 1945, Goss extinguished a fire within his A-26, serial number 43-22501, all the while facing attack from enemy fighters.

Goss was awarded a European-African-Middle-Eastern Service Medal, an Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, a Distinguished Unit Citation and three Battle Stars.

Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley said, "Too much credit cannot be given to these men of the 416th Bomb Group, Ninth Air Force tactical team who are relentlessly battering our foe from the ground and from the air. It is these fighting men who are responsible for our past successes and it is their indomitable spirit which assures the speedy and crushing victories for our cooperating arms."

Following an honorable discharge in September 1945, Goss returned home to Strongsville to marry his pre-war sweetheart, Jean Hiller, who worked as a secretary for the U.S. Treasury Department during the war.