



# From the Desk of Roundtable President Paul "Ponytail" Cauley

March 2020 Issue No. 3 [www.WWIIroundtable.com](http://www.WWIIroundtable.com)

## President's Message

Dear Club members, Welcome to "MARCH"

The word "MARCH" to an infantry soldier has a whole different meaning then to most folks. Believe me I know, if they would have kept us in a straight line with all the "MARCHING" I did thru basic and Advance Infantry Training (AIT) I would have "MARCHED" from sea to shining sea. Then once I got to Vietnam and was assigned to the 101st Airborne Air Assault Division I thought my "MARCHING days were over?!? (Continued p. 2))



History Topic by Dick "Ozzie" Osborne:  
"The Amerika Bomber—Germany's B-29"

## March Program Re-scheduled for April 27, 2020



**Stephen Baranyk, Speaker**  
"Firebombing of Japan"

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Remembrance

*We are thrilled that our March and April speakers were able to adjust their schedules so that our WWII Round Table attendees will still have two wonderful programs. The board felt it was in the best interest of our veterans and members to move the events so as not to needlessly expose anyone to Covid-19, and then take it home to nursing homes or other loved ones.*

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**2020 DINNER PROGRAMS**

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| January 27        | 5:00pm      |
| February 24       | \$10 Buffet |
| March 23          | Program     |
| April 27          | 6:00-8:00pm |
| May 19            |             |
| June 22           |             |
| July 27           |             |
| August 24         |             |
| September 28      |             |
| October 26        |             |
| November 23       |             |
| December 15       |             |
| January 25, 2021  |             |
| February 22, 2021 |             |

### 2020 Membership Dues

Please pay Lucy Parker at the April meeting

- ✚ Veteran \$20
- ✚ Non-Veteran \$25
- ✚ WW2 Veteran free membership

### Announcement:

Gen. Goodwin, Director of the Indiana War Memorial will be speaking briefly to our Round Table members about the 9/11 Memorial on April 27th prior to our main program  
Let's have a great turnout for both gentlemen!

Well I thought “WRONG” to turns out they take you by helicopter from one place in the jungle to another place in the jungle so that you’re not “MARCHING” in the same place all the time. Which wouldn’t been that bad if it had been a change in scenery but once you have seen one part of the jungle you have seen all the jungle!

Well good news came to me at the end of “MARCH” 1971 which is when we were told that the 3/506<sup>th</sup> Infantry unit was pulling out of Vietnam and returning to Ft. Campbell KY. It was at this point in my life that I learned to listen to “The Exact Words That Was Said”. They said the unit, they didn’t say anything about the men in the UNIT!

So what happened was that almost all of the men in that unit just got transferred to another unit to finish out their full one year tour (Turn out if you had 30 days or less of your tour they did let you come home with the unit).

Well lucky me I finally got out of “MARCHING” in the jungle, now I got to sit in an open door of a Huey Helicopter and let the enemy shoot at me, but the good news was we were allowed to shoot back.

Well as you already know I did come home from Vietnam and then “MARCH” started to become a good word for me. I married my lovely wife on “MARCH 8<sup>th</sup>”, and that same beautiful lady celebrates her birthday on “MARCH 12<sup>th</sup>” (I would tell you the year but I’m not that stupid)! My 2<sup>nd</sup> son was born on “MARCH 25<sup>th</sup>” and my first grandson was born on “MARCH 28<sup>th</sup>”.

And finally, after more than 40 years after the end of the war the federal government passed a bill that is the “Welcome Home Vietnam Day” which is celebrated on “MARCH 29<sup>th</sup>” each year.

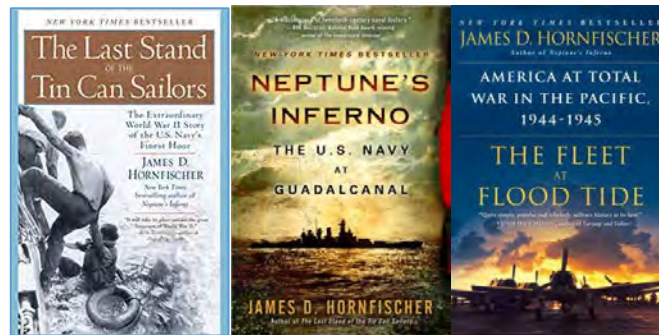
Here’s to hoping and wishing that the month of “MARCH” has meaning to you too.

PonyTail



Well, last month's speaker unfortunately went on a bit too long. All of our 'derrière ou arrière' (behinds or rear ends) were getting a bit sore. I regret he did not get to the topic of the Java Sea, but hopefully you still did learn something new. I would still recommend the three books mentioned in the February newsletter (see below)

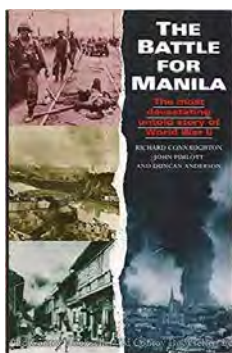
**Recommendations! I could not put any of these books down! They are all extremely well written and gripping. Book 1: *Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors*, Book 2: *Neptune's Inferno*, and Book 3: *The Fleet at Flood Tide***



Considering we are in for an excellent and well-research presentation in March by one of our WWII RT members Steve Baranyk, I thought you might appreciate some more book suggestions as well as some website links related to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the firebombing of Japan.



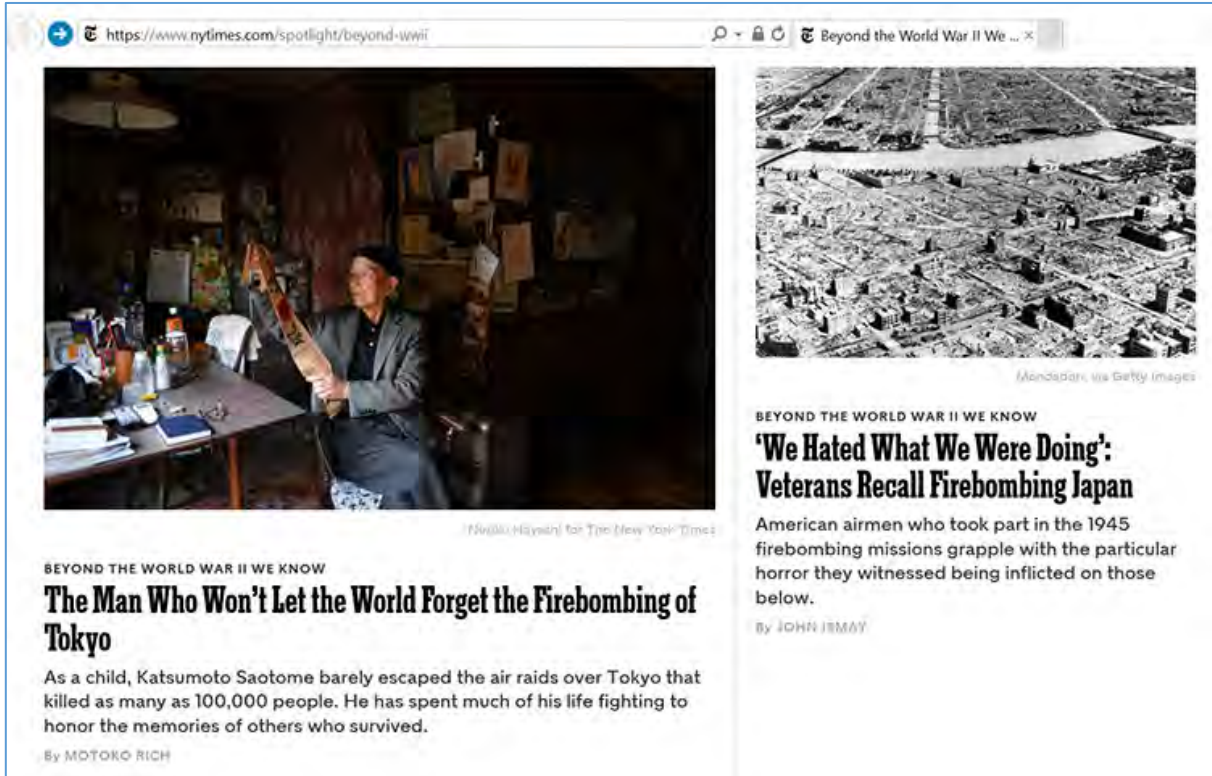
***Among the Dead Cities*** by A. C. Grayling, he writes: "Intended to weaken those countries' ability and will to make war, the bombings nonetheless destroyed centuries of culture and killed some 800,000 non-combatants, injuring and traumatizing hundreds of thousands more in Hamburg, Dresden, and scores of other German cities, in Tokyo, and finally in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Was this bombing offensive justified by the necessities of war," Grayling writes, "or was it a crime against humanity? These questions mark one of the great remaining controversies of the Second World War."



Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and more cities were destroyed. Japan was not alone, however, and Manila, P.I. was another casualty of war. This is a very disturbing book about the ***Battle for Manila*** by Richard Connaughton. This is a detailed account of the liberation/destruction of Manila which left 6500 American, 20,000 Japanese, and 200,000 Manila citizens dead and leveled the thriving, cosmopolitan city once known as the pearl of the Orient.

## RESCHEDULED PROGRAM FOR APRIL: STEPHEN BARANYK

Recent articles relating to Firebombing of Japan: <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/beyond-wwii>



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/beyond-wwii>. The main article features a photograph of an elderly man, Katsumoto Saotome, sitting at a desk in a cluttered room, holding a large, dark, rectangular object. The article title is "BEYOND THE WORLD WAR II WE KNOW: The Man Who Won't Let the World Forget the Firebombing of Tokyo". The sub-headline reads: "As a child, Katsumoto Saotome barely escaped the air raids over Tokyo that killed as many as 100,000 people. He has spent much of his life fighting to honor the memories of others who survived." The author is identified as "By MOTORO RICH". To the right of the main article is a smaller article titled "BEYOND THE WORLD WAR II WE KNOW: 'We Hated What We Were Doing': Veterans Recall Firebombing Japan". Its sub-headline reads: "American airmen who took part in the 1945 firebombing missions grapple with the particular horror they witnessed being inflicted on those below." The author is identified as "By JOHN JEREMY".



On March 9, 2020 The *NY Times* reported on a conversation with four former B-29 bomber crew members who participated in the firebombings of Japan in spring 1945. Go to the link above for the complete articles.

Excerpt from article:  
Richard Gross, 95 Mercer Island, Wash. First Lieutenant, 874th Bomb Squadron, 498th Bomb Group  
“On Saipan, I was in Quonset hut barracks with another crew. And that crew was chosen as the lead crew on the first firebomb mission. The crew members were brought in and asked if they objected to firebombing the cities of Japan. A number of people raised their hands. But the order came down: “Well, that’s your opinion, but the orders are you’re going to go on the mission.” I guess they could have declined, but I don’t know if any did. This was the first information people had that we were going to be bombing the cities.

See also this article from the *Wall Street Journal*:

*How the U.S. Won World War II without Invading Japan* More people died in the March 1945 firebombing of Tokyo than at either Hiroshima or Nagasaki. By Warren Kozak March 8, 2020

The U.S. entered World War II in 1941. Yet American planes couldn't dent a roof in Japan until 1945. The 1942 Doolittle raid, with its 16 bombers that took off from carriers, showed great ingenuity and bravery. But it had zero impact on Japan's ability to make war.

The raid was designed to boost morale after Pearl Harbor. When the U.S. didn't follow up with more attacks, the Japanese believed their homeland was invulnerable to enemy bombs because of the emperor's divine presence. That hubris ended 75 years ago Monday with an event that set in motion the eventual U.S. victory.

First, a little more history: The U.S. could reach Japan only after the Marines took the Mariana Islands at great cost in 1944. The largest airports in the world were built within months and filled with new, modern B-29 bombers. The B-29 was a marvel and the greatest expense of the war at \$3 billion, compared with \$2.4 billion for the Manhattan Project. Each plane was three times the size of the next-largest bomber, the B-17. The B-29 could fly 3,700 miles and cruise at an altitude high enough to elude antiaircraft fire.

But the B-29 ran into a problem during its first mission over Japan—huge winds up to 200 miles an hour. The jet stream rendered it impossible for bombs to hit targets.

Hap Arnold, head of the Army Air Force, turned to his youngest general, 38-year-old Curtis LeMay, who didn't fit the profile of the glamorous flyboy. LeMay was slightly overweight, surly and taciturn. Most people found him frightening. He was a lieutenant in 1940 but rose out of obscurity to become the most innovative problem solver in bomber command. LeMay also insisted on flying the lead bomber on every dangerous mission. He was also the only U.S. general in the war who fought in front of his troops—a case study in military leadership.

LeMay approached the jet-stream dilemma like the engineer he was. On the night of March 9, 1945, he sent 346 B-29s to Tokyo. In a radical departure from normal operations, he ordered the planes to fly low—5,000 feet—and not in formation, but in a single-file line. The planes would drop incendiaries instead of impact bombs. The crews protested, assuming they would be destroyed by the flak. But LeMay believed the crews could survive because the Japanese wouldn't see this coming.

(continued next page)

**FUTURE PROGRAM – JULY 27 JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT**

He was right. With minimum loss to the U.S., the incendiaries started a firestorm that burned down more than 16 square miles of Tokyo. The firestorm left more than a million homeless and killed an estimated 100,000 men, women and children. The Japanese were as surprised as they were devastated. More people died during that 24-hour period than perished five months later in either Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

If this sounds shocking to contemporary ears, consider the context. An estimated 15 million to 17 million Asian civilians were killed—Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos and those from every other country Japan conquered. Like their German allies, the Japanese adopted a sense of triumphal racial superiority. Many of their victims were killed in the most brutal, medieval ways. An average of 250,000 people were dying throughout Asia every month in the first half of 1945.

As Americans approached the mainland, the Japanese fought even more ferociously on Iwo Jima and later Okinawa. The war in the Pacific was turning into an out-of-control bloodbath. The only way to stop this mass death—and prevent a prolonged guerrilla war following the largest invasion in history—was to force the empire to surrender by destruction from the air.

The U.S. would have to firebomb 64 Japanese cities, capped off by the two atomic bombs in August 1945, to end World War II. In the tragic calculus of war, it took the deaths of untold numbers of human beings to save the lives of even more. These are brutal realities few people today can imagine, let alone confront.

Sept. 2 will mark the 75th anniversary of the Japanese surrender on the USS Missouri. That happened without an invasion of the Japanese mainland. Imagine Iwo Jima times 100 or even 1,000. At least a million American servicemen and many more millions of Japanese lived full lives thanks to the terrible and tragic—but necessary—events that began on March 9, 1945.

*Mr. Kozak is author of “LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay.”*

***Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay smokes a cigar at the Pentagon in Washington, July 1945.***



## PREVIEW OF MAY 2020 PROGRAM

### Dr. Gilbert Herod My Two Years as a Surgeon in Vietnam



Dr. Gilbert Herod retired as a cardiovascular thoracic surgeon at Methodist Hospital.

Graduated from Broad Ripple High School 1954 and Butler University 1957, followed by Western Reserve (Now “Case Western Reserve”) Medical School 1961. Completed General Surgery Residency Methodist Hospital 1966  
Medical Officer in Charge- Da Nang Civil Hospital 1966-1967  
Chief of Surgery Hue Hospital 1968

Completed Thoracic Surgery Residency University of Michigan Medical Center  
Board Certified by American Board of Surgery and American Board of Thoracic Surgery  
Designated “Gold Life Master” by the American Contract Bridge League  
(Past) President of Methodist Hospital Medical Staff

Da Nang Civil Hospital [AMA American Journal of Ethics]



*In the mid-1960s, every doctor below the age of 35 was faced with military service. Instead of joining the military for a war he did not believe in, Gil’s brother suggested serving in Vietnamese civilian hospitals. This substituted for the two-year military obligation and served a valid need. After completing his residency at Methodist, he started working at the Da Nang Civil Hospital.*

*The staff was only three or four American doctors as the Vietnamese physicians were in the military. Conditions at the hospital were very poor with minimal staff and minimal supplies. Occasionally they received outdated blood from a US Military facility. In addition, the staff had to deal with all injuries without specialists.*

*He worked closely with students from the Hue Medical School, which they considered to be the Harvard of the East.*

**Ideas for more reading:** 1) Patricia Rushton, *Vietnam War Nurses: Personal Accounts of 18 Americans* 2) Paul J. Pitlyk , *Blood on China Beach: My Story as a Brain Surgeon in Vietnam*; 3) Eugene H Eisman MD, *Bitter Medicine, A Doctor's Year in Vietnam*, 4) Mark Bowden, *Hue 1968*

