

# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



## **Major Thomas William Berube Navigator B-17 Bombers USAAF WWII, Viet Nam**

Tom Berube was born in Munising, Michigan on August 10, 1920. Following high school, he attended Northern State Teacher's College in Marquette. Thirty days after Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army Air Force at the age of 22.

He became a flying cadet at the Navigator School at Mather Air Force Base, Sacramento, California. In September of 1942, he received his commission and was

assigned to a B-17 bomber wing operating out of North Africa and later on the European continent in Italy.

He participated in 50 combat missions resulting in five Air Medals, one for each ten missions. He casually mentioned being wounded on one flight from exploded anti-aircraft flak, and for this he received the Purple Heart.

On another mission while flying from a base in North Africa, his plane was shot down and he parachuted into contested territory. At that point, he had four choices: he could walk north, south, east or west. For some reason, maybe remembering the Horatio Alger story, he

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chose west. After a long, long hike in the desert, he saw soldiers and they saw him. Lady Luck was with him; it was a British company and not a German one (or he might have been shot or made a prisoner of war).

At the end of hostilities, Berube returned to the states where he was assigned to the Ferry Command. This involved navigating planes bound for a diversity of locations including India, Australia, Iran, Iraq, Alaska and Brazil.

Following this duty, he returned to civilian life in Michigan only to rejoin the Active Reserves as a "Weekend Warrior" with the 8502<sup>nd</sup> Navigation Training Squadron at Selfridge AFB. In this capacity, he volunteered for assignment to Viet Nam. He was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in that theatre.

Berube's boss, Major General Albert T. Wilson Jr., Vice Commander of the Continental Air Command, presented him with the medal at the Reserve Officer's Association Convention at the Sheraton Cadillac Hotel in Detroit. Attending were Governor Romney and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara.

TJ Mudge, Apr. 2006