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PROJECT "WELCOME HOME" Vietnam Air War Memorial Park

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WAR CHATS

DICK NELMS, A WORLD WAR II VETERAN

B-17 Pilot, volunteers in front of his plane in the Aviation Pavilion almost every Saturday. Enjoy these excerpts about his service in Germany from his recent recording session with the Museum's Oral History Team.

"On a Leipzig mission, without any warning at all, the first volley came right up underneath my airplane and it bounced us into the air like it hit a speed bump in your car. Then you hear the sickening sound of flak coming through your plane, you know? And it scared me and I said, okay, that's self-preservation. But it wasn't okay, because it didn't go away...a few moments later one went off at 11:00, very close...And I looked down I said, you missed me. I knew that shouting into my oxygen mask wasn't going to shorten the war, but it still made me feel that by golly, I can yell at you guys if I want to, you know?...I forced myself to say, Isn't it great that thing went off when it did. Everything's okay...that's what keeps the fear down."

You can access Dick's entire oral history for free through the Museum's library. Contact curator@museumofflight.org to request it. This interview was possible with generous support from Mary Kay and Michael Hallman.



ONE OF MUSEUM'S MOST ICONIC AIRCRAFT, the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress #59-2584, has been lost in plain sight for the past 24 years. Like many other American veterans of the Vietnam War, our B-52 has suffered from neglect. The jet is currently parked at Paine Field in Everett, patiently waiting a final restoration and placement at the Museum.

The time has come for this warbird to be given a new home in a place of honor. The planned Vietnam Air War Memorial Park at the Museum will be that place. The B-52 will be the centerpiece of a park honoring the men and women who served their country and the aircraft that made it possible. The restored B-52 will rest between the west side of the Aviation Pavilion and the Duwamish River, and join a statue of a pilot that represents the nearly 8,000 US military planes and helicopters lost during Vietnam. One of only a few memorials in the US dedicated to the Vietnam Air War, the new site will be free of charge, and open to all who wish to learn, honor and remember.

Learn more at museumofflight.org/WelcomeHome.



STILL COOL AT 70

IN AUGUST 1947 the prototype of the Museum's Antonov An-2 made its first flight. The big, boxy biplane is an incongruous sight in the Aviation Pavilion, flanked by sleek jetliners and cool Top Gun fighters, but the Russian taildragger has seen all of them come and most of them go during its 45-year production run. It's a notorious bush plane and a top choice for adventurers. Ours, *Polar One*, is no exception. In 1998 it was one of a team of two An-2s flown on a thrilling aerial expedition to the top of the world, which makes it every bit as cool as the Tomcat beside it.