

**They Gave
Blood,
Sweat,
And Tears**

**True Stories of American Veterans
From World War II to Operation Iraqi
Freedom**

**By
Bill Hall**

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Turnout-A Firefighters Story

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the millions of American veterans who have served in the American Armed Forces. Their dedication and fortitude in the presence of enemy forces, seen and unseen, and during peacetime, is unwavering and is to be commended daily. The oath they swear when entering the service is one they take not lightly:

"I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

It is with a grateful heart that I give thanks to God for allowing me the opportunity to interview so many American heroes and to hear and tell their stories. This book is dedicated to them, their heroism, their sacrifice and their service. There but by the Grace of God they go.

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Introduction

The stories you are about to read are real. I was able to interview fifty-eight veterans during the course of thirteen months from 2009-2010 and tell their stories to the public. Fifty-four have agreed to let you hear them. Let me tell you how this project began.

In the early spring of 2009, I was between jobs. One day I decided to go out for lunch and visited a local fast food restaurant in the area. As I sat there and ate my lunch, I noticed a car pull up outside. From the vehicle an elderly gentleman slowly got out and went to the passenger side and assisted his wife from the car. She was obviously blind and needed assistance.

The pair cautiously entered the restaurant, and he guided his wife into her seat. He then went to the counter and ordered their food. As I glanced over from time to time, I watched them eat and converse happily with one another.

I noticed the ball cap the man was wearing but could not read it very well from where I was sitting. I did realize it had something to do with being a veteran. I got up to get a refill of my drink and walked past them. I was able to read his hat at that point. It said that he had been in World War II and had been in an amphibious group in the Navy.

I went back to my seat and finished my lunch. I pondered my next move. I gathered up my trash and got up and put it in the garbage container. I then walked over to the gentleman. I asked him if he had been in World War II and he acknowledged that he had been and served in the Navy. I reached out with my right hand and shook his, thanking him for his service to our country. Delighted and overwhelmed,

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he tried to stand up but I begged him to stay. “Why thank you. Were you in the service, son?” He inquired of me.

“Yes.” I replied. “I was in the Coast Guard during Vietnam.” He then reciprocated and thanked me for my service. I smiled at both of them and made my way out to my car. When I got there, I sat for a while and did some thinking.

Someone needs to tell these stories, I thought to myself, *before it's too late.* As I began the drive home, my mind would not stop thinking about this gentleman. By the time I arrived home, I had a plan thought out.

I got on my computer and created a query on email to send to the Carroll County Times newspaper in Westminster, Maryland. It would be to the attention of the editor, Mr. Jim Lee. I asked Mr. Lee if he would consider a newspaper series on true stories of veterans. I would go out and interview each one and then tell their story. He thought it was a great idea. He requested five to six stories ahead to see how they would look and see my writing style. The rest is history. From July 4, 2009 until August 7, 2010 the series *Blood, Sweat and Tears* appeared weekly in the Times.

I never did get the name of that gentleman in the fast-food restaurant that fateful day. But I am indebted to him and to every veteran I interviewed in the series. I have never felt as humbled as I did when I did each interview in the presence of true American heroes.

One thing that really amazed me was how humble these gentlemen were. Not one of them glorified war. They all said they were just doing their job for their country. They did not consider themselves special. They did not consider themselves heroes. They did not think they deserved special treatment because of what they did. They did it because they felt it was their duty.

“*War is Hell.*” These were the words of General William Tecumseh Sherman during the American Civil War. These

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words would resonate throughout the decades to follow as an apt description of armed conflict.

Many people try to glorify and make war seem to be something to revere. In their eyes there is nothing like it. There is nothing ever glorious from war, not even the victory. Lives are lost, bodies maimed for life, civilians killed, and properties are destroyed. The joy of the victories may be short-lived due to the overwhelming realization that a country must be rebuilt and families must be reborn.

What the men in these stories did was an ultimate test of their character and fortitude. Their character speaks volumes as they reached heights never approached before. Many were from farms or small towns. Some withdrew from college and put their education on hold. They all left families and sweethearts behind. They knew what they were going to was much larger and important. What they were going to do had to be done and they would do it. Some came home perfectly fine while others took years to regroup, and some would never be able to. Some were prisoners-of-war and some may never have seen battle. But all had served and did so without reservation.

These gentlemen are the real heroes in American history and everyday life, not television or movie stars, rockers or sports people. They are the ones that have helped preserve our liberties and the lives we have today. They are the ones that have lived and died for our freedoms abroad, so we did not have to fight them on our ground. Wars are not something we should strive for. They are something that should be avoided at all costs. However, when all efforts fail, it may be a necessary evil. If we are to preserve our way of life, it comes with a cost. That cost may be war and loss of lives.

There is a saying that nothing is free. It is so true when it comes to freedom. Our nation has been truly blessed by God and He has given us the rights and freedoms to preserve it

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and maintain it. We must be good stewards of what He has given unto us.

Decades ago, the military used to use a phrase that is still very appropriate – peace through strength. If we do not maintain what these men have fought for, it will be lost. We must maintain a strong national defense and preserve the liberties of our nation for our future generations. There will always be evil in the world and we must be ready to face it. We must be strong enough to face. We must have the guts to face it. When and if war comes to us, we must be ready to fight it to win. We must have men and women with the moral fortitude and courage to face it head on such as those in these stories.

I publicly thank these men for allowing me to tell their stories to the world. During these interviews sometimes chins quivered, sometimes eyes welled up, and sometimes exits from the room were appropriate. But the stories were told. They felt equally compelled to let people know what they did and what they saw. People should know what they sacrificed in time, family, friends and memories.

In closing, please enjoy these stories and when you see a veteran or know a veteran, take a moment to say “Thank you.” Look around and thank God for the nation you live in and the freedoms you enjoy. It is because of them and **not** a politician you have the liberties you have today.

A special thank you goes to Mr. Jim Lee of the Carroll County Times newspaper for having the faith in me to allow me to tell these stories in his newspaper. I would also like to thank Mr. Wayne Carter of the Carroll County Times for working with me weekly in getting the stories edited, corrected and published in a timely manner.

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Eliot W. Annable
Aka Bill Eliot
Master Sergeant, U.S. Army
423rd Regimental Headquarters Co.
106th Infantry Division
World War II

Little did Charles and Elizabeth Annable of Bangor, Maine know that on October 13, 1924, their newborn son, Eliot, would one day become a decorated warrior in one of the greatest wars of the ages.

Just eighteen years old and in his first year at the University of Rhode Island, Eliot was inducted into the Army on June 11, 1943. During his service as a combat infantryman, he received combat credit (battle stars on his European campaign ribbon) for Northern France, Central Europe, the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), and the Rhineland. He was later awarded the Bronze Star for his combat service.

On Dec. 16, 1944 the 106th Infantry Division, consisting of the 422nd, 423rd and 424th Infantry Regiments and supporting elements, was spread thinly just inside the western border of Germany facing the heavily fortified German Siegfried Line. Eliot's company, the 423rd Regimental Headquarters Co., occupied Buchet, Germany, a small hamlet just east of St. Vith, Belgium. The whole area was considered to be a quiet sector and it was felt that the Germans were not capable of mounting a significant attack in that area. As a complete surprise to the allied leaders, at 5:30 AM, on that Dec. 16th the Battle of the Bulge began with a massive ground shaking German artillery barrage followed by an overwhelming attack by armored panzer divisions and infantry. By the end of the second day the

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422nd and 423rd Regiments were surrounded with no chance to withdraw or to receive any reinforcing support. Although almost out of ammunition and completely cut off, the 422nd and 423rd Regiments held out for a week before being forced to surrender. Less than a month later Eliot would be the only remaining member of his platoon not killed, wounded, or captured.

When the battle started Eliot was a radio operator in the company's communications platoon with the rank of corporal. Immediately after the attack started communication between units was almost exclusively by radio since most of the wires had been severed. In fact, the first casualty in Eliot's platoon was a wireman who was killed by German fire while on a pole trying to repair severed wires. Because of these communication problems, Eliot and Herb Heidepriem, another radio operator, were sent with a jeep mounted radio, and with armored car escort, to an attached cavalry troop, Troop B 18th Cavalry, to establish communications. Troop B was in Winterscheid, Germany, a small town a few miles away from 423rd headquarters. Troop B had been under heavy attack and by nightfall of the first day the Germans had driven a wedge between Troop B and the 423rd and had penetrated deeper to the rear of the American lines as they were concentrating on their first major objective, the city of St. Vith, Belgium.

Early on the second day Troop B was ordered to attempt to rejoin the regiment in a defense perimeter. At Mutzenich, Germany, Troop B was blocked from getting back to the 423rd by columns of German forces on one of the main roads to St. Vith. After heavy artillery shelling a German under a white flag demanded that Troop B surrender. The demand was refused, and Eliot reported to regiment that they were waiting for further orders. When none came, Captain Fossland, the commander of Troop B, decided to attempt to break through to St. Vith several miles to the west. This attempt was blocked by a convoy of German troops and after

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a brief firefight, and with all escape routes blocked, Troop B withdrew to the village of Amelscheid to take stock. Finally establishing radio contact with the 423rd Captain Fossland was told “St. Vith is in enemy hands. Make your own decision.” Captain Fossland then ordered the troop to withdraw into a densely wooded area, destroy as much equipment as they could, separate into small groups, and attempt to infiltrate back to American forces west of St. Vith. St. Vith was actually still in American hands and held out for four more days causing a major setback to the Germans.

Eliot and Herb destroyed as much of their radio equipment as they could, pulled the wires from their Jeep and headed into the Ardennes Forest. It was foggy, the ground was covered with patchy snow, and the sky was completely overcast. They had no food, maps, or compass. To protect themselves they had their M1 rifles and 40 rounds of ammunition. For the next five days, although fired on several times, they managed to avoid capture by keeping to the woods and skirting towns as much as possible. At night, with no visibility to stars, they used the glow of fires from burning towns to help in heading west. They were also aided by the sounds of German V1 missile “buzz bombs” being fired towards Liege, Belgium. At one point, while hiding along the side of a road, they heard a convoy of American vehicles approaching. They kept hidden and saw, as the trucks passed by, they were captured American trucks filled with German soldiers. Eliot later learned the road led to Malmady where the infamous Malmady massacre of American POW’s occurred that day.

After five days of working their way west, Eliot and Herb finally encountered elements of the 82nd Airborne Division near Trois Ponts, Belgium. They were held at rifle point until they could prove they were Americans because German troops had been infiltrating dressed in American uniforms. They were returned to the only remaining regiment of the 106th Division, the 424th. For the rest of the war in

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Europe the 424th operated as a regimental combat team filling gaps between other divisions.

On January 13, 1945 while elements of the 424th were attempting to take the town of Coulee, Belgium, Herb was severely wounded by artillery fire and was hospitalized for the duration. That made Eliot the only member of his original platoon still in action (Herb later became one of the leading legislators in South Dakota). Eliot continued with the 424th for the rest of the war. Soon after Germany surrendered, he was transferred to the 3rd Armored Division, where he was promoted to Master Sergeant as regimental communications chief, and then to the 2nd Armored Division for return to the US and discharge on Feb. 6, 1946.

For his service, Eliot was awarded five battle stars, the Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Rifle, European African Middle Eastern Theater Campaign Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal and the Bronze Star. To him, the most meaningful is the Bronze Star, an honor more for the men who didn't survive than for himself.

Eliot moved to Maryland in 1949 after finishing college and worked for Westinghouse as an electronics engineer for 36 years until 1984. Today he resides in New Windsor, Maryland and works as a musician in the Baltimore Musicians Union. In regard to his service, he says "It was an honor to serve my country, and I would do it again under similar circumstances, but there is nothing glorious about war and its horrors. It is all misery and suffering. I hope the day comes when all countries will learn that there are no winners in a war... only losers."

When he returned home, he recalls sitting in his bedroom thinking as he reached out and touched the walls, "I am really here. I can't believe I made it!"

James F. Bard, Jr.
Captain
Jet Mechanic/Comptroller
91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing
U.S. Air Force
Cold War

Beale Air Force Base, California...January 1966. Many of the personnel stationed at Beale, including twenty-nine-year-old James Bard, Jr., ran out onto the runway to see what was coming in for a landing. They lined the tarmac and waited patiently. Then out of the blue, a glint appeared. Slowly, it began to develop a shape that became recognizable. It began its approach and landed quietly. Bard never saw anything so beautiful in his life. The Lockheed SR-71 long range strategic reconnaissance aircraft, unofficially named "Blackbird," rolled to a stop from its birthplace in Sunnyvale, California. He could not stop looking at it. It was a moment he would never forget.

James F. Bard, Jr. was born February 19, 1937 to Mary Catherine and James Bard, Sr. of Hagerstown, Maryland and lived there with his brother and sister. In 1942, his father took the family and moved to Baltimore, Maryland to work at Maryland Dry Dock. Bard, Jr. attended high school at Thomas Edison but quit at age 16. He went to work for Maryland Casualty Insurance Company for a year as an IBM machine operator. Duty called, but Mom had to sign, and James Bard enlisted in the U.S. Air Force at age 17 on March 29, 1954.

Bard wound up at Sampson Air Force Base in New York for recruit training. His first assignment was Flight 3244 but lasted for only a week due to him receiving pneumonia. He says he left the meanest instructor for the

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greatest instructor. The young recruit wound up at Amarillo AF Base, Texas to be trained as a multi-jet aircraft mechanic for the B-47.

In November 1954, he received his first permanent assignment to the 323rd SR Squadron of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Lockbourne Air Force Base in Ohio as an RB-47E mechanic. While there he met his first wife at a USO dance, married her in 1957 and had three children before divorcing in 1968. He began looking for an inside job and, because of his experience in IBM machines, began working in the office of the Chief of Maintenance on the new time accounting system recently instituted throughout the Strategic Air Command.

The 91st has a long history. It was the 91st Bomb Group during WW II but was deactivated after the war. It was then reactivated as the Strategic Reconnaissance Wing under the Strategic Air Command and during Vietnam it became a wing for B-52's. In 1968 it would become the 91st Missile wing.

In the summer of 1956, the wing went to Ben Guerir AB in Morocco. However, in November 1957 the 91st was deactivated and were re-designated the 376th Bombardment Wing. They worked on EB-47E's which were full of electronic countermeasures equipment. But in 1958, his enlistment ended, and he left the Air Force for 85 days but realized he made more money in the service as a Staff Sergeant. So he reenlisted.

With the new Maintenance Data Collection System instituted, he found himself implementing the new system for the 376th Bomb Wing. He attended specialized training at Chanute AFB in Illinois and then went to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to assist in writing the system codebook for the B-47's.

In 1962 he changed career paths to get out of maintenance. He wound up being reassigned from aircraft maintenance to the Management Analysis Office in Wing

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Headquarters. Bard studied for and passed his GED and enrolled in evening college classes and in December 1963 was promoted to Technical Sergeant and sent to Goose Bay AB in Labrador, Canada. Fifteen months later he was assigned to Beale AFB, California with the SR-71 Blackbird Program, later designed the 9th Strategic reconnaissance Wing, receiving promotion to Master Sergeant in 1966.

While at Beale, he took more college courses and graduated from Yuba Community College and began attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1968. While there, he was accepted into Officers Training School (OTS). In May 1969, he received his Bachelor's and headed off to OTS at Lackland AFB, Texas, graduating as a Second Lieutenant September 6, 1969. Bard was assigned to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations in Washington, DC where he received his next two promotions. He also received another promotion in 1971 when he married Ruth, his second wife of 39 years, in Omaha.

In August 1973, Bard found himself assigned to Hahn, Germany for the next four years as Chief of Management and Budget for the 50th Tactical Fighter Wing. In 1977 assignment came to the 347th Tactical Fighter Wing at Moody AFB, Georgia where he would be Base Comptroller for three months. But on October 1, 1980, Bard had set his sights on retirement. He is proud of rising in the ranks from Basic Airman to Captain. He talks about how proud he is to have served his country and improve his own life over and over.

During the Cold War, pilots were shot down and aircraft were lost. Aerial surveillance and covert flights was a common thing on both sides. Bard tells tales of pilots coming back from missions with their places full of holes from MIG-17's.

Bard and his family settled down in Carroll County in 1981. He loves to tell tales of his service to his country so much that he has co-authored a book with Linda Rios