

WWII Memorial Visit

as reported by Richard E. "Dick" Park

I visited the memorial the day after the very impressive dedication ceremony and it certainly lives up to its advanced p.r. There have been many articles in the Washington Post as I'm sure there have been in your local papers. Just wanted to share some of what's being said and some pictures of the CBI marker at the memorial.

One Washington Post article stated the following: General William Slim, commander of the British 14th Army in Burma (note: the 4th Combat Cargo Group air supplied this army all the way to Rangoon), when addressing his troops said, "When you go home, don't worry about what to tell your loved ones and friends about service in Asia. No one will know where you were or where it is if you tell them. You are, and will remain, the forgotten army."

However, Senator Bob Dole promised that we would be honored on the National World War II Memorial, and he kept his word. We got top billing on the Pacific side of the memorial and we are listed first among the major areas. No longer are our efforts so forgotten.

Another Post article had several words for those



who think that the design of the memorial is too busy, too impersonal or too lacking in the essential story of that great global conflict. One person said, "As far as the critics go, they should just stay home." Much of the criticism of the memorial has been harsh, loud, and derisive for what they term a militaristic tone and empty grandeur and for not conveying to an uninformed visitor what the war was all about. But to the veterans and their families attending, those critics

are missing the point. "The hell with them" said one vet. "It's not here for looks or design or remarks about appearance. It's for remembrance, to remember what everybody went through during that time."

We arrived at the memorial about 7 a.m. and the area was filled with WWII vets and their families.



They were early risers just like our guys at our reunions. It's nice to know that we finally have our own memorial and a glorious one at that.

Here are some of the pictures that we took that morning of an old Hump pilot. I just wish that every one of our guys could have the opportunity to see how they are honored at the memorial. See you in Denver for the dedication of the C-46.

Editors Note: We have been notified by the WWII Memorial Dedication Committee that a tape of the entire dedication ceremony is available from: www.c-span.org for \$29.95.

Additional Note: On the Pacific side of the memorial are the words President Roosevelt used to announce the attack on Pearl Harbor: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941.. a date that will live in infamy.. The United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked. With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph." This completes the quote.

Those of us who heard President Roosevelt speak to Congress on that date will remember that the phrase quoted above at the monument actually ended with the term, "so help us God."

Pub: was this change really necessary?