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NATIONAL PRESIDENT

PVA from the TOP

A Special Day

Last year, I asked, "What does Veterans Day mean to you?" I hope all of you have found meaning in this special day and are able to share it privately or publicly.

One of the privileges I have as Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) national president is to receive a daily email from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) highlighting the day's current veteran-related stories and ending with a "veteran of the day" story.

The veteran of the day stories range from heroic to mundane. I'm thankful just knowing that a man or woman raised his or her right hand and swore to protect and serve this country in a military uniform.

Recently, I watched the movie *12 Strong* about the first U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets) members who fought in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks. Special Forces and Operations personnel have rightfully earned more distinguished recognition for their bravery and selfless service.

Instead of doing a history piece on Veterans Day, I would like to briefly tell you a story about distinguished U.S. Air Force veteran Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott Jr.

In September, I went to Warner Robins, Ga., to meet with former PVA employee Gwen Davis, who now works at the Museum of Aviation Foundation at Robins Air Force Base, to see if our two organizations could collaborate.

I learned who Scott was and about his many impressive accomplishments right before the foundation's board meeting. The interesting thing I learned was that we both served at the now-closed Williams Air Force Base in the suburban Phoenix area.

While I was serving there from 1987 to 1989, he was retired and living a couple of towns away. I looked up to pilots like Scott. He was one of the men who flew planes that many people worked on and who trusted our skills and craftsmanship with their lives while flying in combat and non-combat missions.

Scott was a native Georgian who graduated from the U.S. Military Academy and served in the United States Army Air Forces (USAF) during World War II. He flew numerous aircraft on 388 combat missions and 925 hours from July 1942 to October 1943. Scott shot down 13 Japanese aircraft and is noted as one of America's earliest flying aces of the war.

He served a 26-year career in the Army and USAF and worked in several career fields and projects after his service. Scott also wrote a dozen books, the most famous being

The Day I Owned the Sky and *God Is My Co-Pilot*, which was made into a movie about his life story.

Scott continued to fly after the service well into his 80s. After his wife passed away, he moved from Arizona back to Warner Robins to raise awareness and money for the Museum of Aviation Foundation.

He passed away in 2006 at age 97 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., with full military honors. To learn more about him, visit af.mil/About-Us/Biographies and type his name into the biography search portal, or put his name into the search engine of your choice.

To all of the men and women who served this nation in military uniform, I humbly thank you all, and may this Veterans Day be a great day for you! ■



Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott Jr.

COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF AVIATION FOUNDATION

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