



# THE ATLANTA WORLD WAR II ROUND TABLE

PRE SERVING HISTORY

INTERNET: <http://www.atlantawwiroundtable.org>

VOL. 31 No. 1 301<sup>st</sup> MEETING

**Editor:** John E. Kovach

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**Contributor(s)** To This Newsletter

\* Representative John Yates

\* Dr. Lester Tenney

\* Pete Mecca / Jay Lenny

\* Greg McClelland /

\* Emily Carley / Martin Madert

**Elected Officers 2015-2016**

**Commander** – Pete Mecca

Tel: 770-354-9697

**Deputy Commander** – Deborah

Lindsay; Tel: 770-310-1775

**Adjutant** – John Kovach

**Finance Officer**- Jay Lenny

Dep. Finance Ofc: Guy Condra

**Sgt.-at-Arms** – Ralph Lehr (Capt.)

Sgt.-at-Arms - Bob Rivers

Sgt.-at-Arms – Mike Koesters

**Sr. Chaplain** – Pat Buchanan

Asst/ Chaplain – Elaine Rivers

Chaplain Emeritus: Carl Espy, Jr.

**Date:** SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 (THURSDAY) >>>> Next Meeting Oct..20<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** Social Half-Hour: **11:30 AM – 12:00 NOON** > **MEETING START TIME 12:00 NOON** - Speaker Immediately Following Lunch

\*\* **PETITE AUBERGE RESTAURANT**

**2935 N. Druid Hills Road, Web Site: [www.petiteauberge.com](http://www.petiteauberge.com)**

**Atlanta, Georgia 30329 (Restaurant Phone: 404-634-6268)**

**Price: \$ 20.00 Per Plate \*\* NO RESERVATION REQUIRED \*\***

**Speaker(s): Representative John Yates**

**Subject: "I've Been A Lucky Rascal"**

### Mission Statement

**We, who by our own actions, and by our heritage, know that liberty has not, is not, nor ever will be free, do in association with our friends and comrades, who believe as we do, pledge that we will meet at the call of our Commander no less than ten times a year:**

**\* To hear of the war experiences of our members and invited guests**

**\* To encourage and demonstrate pride in our country and its armed forces**

**\* To pass on to posterity our knowledge of World War II, and of the price – Human and material - that was paid by our nation for the preservation of liberty in the United States and the world**

### **APPOINTMENTS 2015-2016**

Hank Frampton - Asst. Commander

Joe Jordan - Aide-to-Commander(s)

(( Meeting Attendance For The June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting: ± 160 ))

**Speaker for SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Representative John Yates (To Be Introduced By Commander Mecca )**

The SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 (THURSDAY) Meeting of the Atlanta WW II Round Table will feature State Representative John P. Yates as our speaker.

After graduating from high school (they didn't have 12 grades back then), he left Georgia for work in California before the war. After hearing about the attack on Pearl Harbor, he joined the Army in 1942 and was sent to Fort Sill, OK for Officer Candidate School. In an interview, Yates said OCS was the toughest 3 months of his life. "They didn't give us enough to eat nor the time to eat it," he recalled. "They did their best to break us, the washout rate was about 75%."

He became a liaison pilot and an officer, flying a Piper Cub airplane used often by the military for reconnaissance, transporting supplies and artillery spotting. As a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, he reported to North Texas State Teachers College to be trained by former crop dusters.

Yates flew more than 200 missions near or over enemy lines in Europe and was awarded six Air Medals and four battle stars. After the war, he earned his college degree and joined Ford Motor Co. as a biller, working his way up to become a depot manager in a 35-year career.

First elected in 1989 as one of the House's few Republicans, Yates now serves as chairman of the House Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee. He keeps regular office hours at the Capitol one to two days a week, making the 40-minute drive himself up from the family farm near Sunny Side.

His office now sits on the second floor of the state Capitol just off the center rotunda, a prime spot given its proximity to the governor's office. On busy days, when school tours pack into the building, state Rep. John P. Yates will quietly slip into the hall, wave at a teacher and then gather her students around him. Sometimes, he'll just talk. Other times, he'll gather them around his desk and show them what he likes to call "my museum" — the framed war medals, honoring resolutions and personal photos of an airplane and handsome young U.S. Army officer lining the walls. Sometimes he tells these stories of flying over German tanks and dropping these 5-gallon tanks of gas on them and getting away before they could fire on him.

"I'm the last World War II veteran left up here," the 93-year-old legislator will tell them. "I guess I've been a lucky rascal."

Please welcome State Representative John Yates as our SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 speaker (301<sup>st</sup> Meeting.)

**Speaker Review for JUNE 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016-- Dr. Lester Tenney ( Introduced By Deputy Commander Deborah Lindsay )**

The June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting of the Atlanta WW II Round Table featured Dr. Lester Tenney as our guest speaker. Deputy Commander Deborah Lindsay started her introduction of Dr. Tenney by announcing some special guests in attendance including Sheffield Hale, President and CEO of the Atlanta History Center; Bill Speer, noted military historian from Augusta, GA; Representatives from both WSB Radio and the Marietta Daily Journal; Dr. Betty Ann Cook, Executive Director of the Cobb County Outreach and Community Engagement Program; and Representatives from the National WW II Museum in New Orleans.

Lester began his presentation by advising all present that his talk was not political. He noted that the U.S. Military Commanders knew, as early as 1939, that WW II had to be won in Europe first,

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announcing the 'Europe First' initiative. Washington did not anticipate at the time that Pearl Harbor would be devastated and thought that Pearl would support the initial war effort in the Pacific.

Dr. Tenney recalled the shocking events that took place in the Philippines including the first tank battle of WW II where American tanks from the 192<sup>nd</sup> Tank Battalion under the Command of Major Theodore F. Wickord, engaged Japanese tanks at the town of Damortis, Philippines on December 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 1941. General Douglas MacArthur at this time, fearing capture by the Japanese, left the Philippines and sailed to Australia, leaving the Command of Bataan to Generals Jonathan M. (Skinny) Wainwright and Edward King Jr. MacArthur received the *Congressional Medal of Honor* for leaving the Philippines.

Lester recalled that the remaining operational Provisional Tank Group ( combining the 192<sup>nd</sup> and 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalions ) was ordered to cover the allied retreat towards the Bataan Peninsula where the forces were ordered to surrender to the Japanese by General Edward King Jr. Lester commended King on the decision to surrender, despite disobeying a direct command from MacArthur not to surrender and facing a possible Court-Martial ( General King was not Court-Martialed and did spend 3-years as a prisoner-of-the Japanese ).

Thus on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1942, the infamous *Bataan Death March* began. Tenney said the March became known as the 'Death March' because of how those captured by the Japanese died on the March ( the March began with the capture of 12,000 Americans and 72,000 Filipinos). Many were killed by the Japanese simply because they stopped walking or were affected by a Malaria attack or just looked at a Japanese soldier in the wrong way. Many were beaten, bayoneted, and otherwise mistreated. Of the 84,000 prisoners that began the March, only 54,000 reached the destination, Camp O'Donnell.

After reaching Camp O'Donnell, the prisoners were eventually transported to Japan to work in the coal mines as slaves. Lester recounted there were 500 prisoners in the ships hold at the time and it took nearly 30 days to reach Japan. Food and water were always tightly rationed, and the Americans, Dutch, New Zealanders, Australians and other prisoners-of-war/slaves had to begin a system of rationing amongst them using a cigarettes-for-rice system. Lester said he first learned about finance while a prisoner-of-war / slave to the Japanese and he became known as the 'Cigarette King'.

Thank-You Dr. Lester Tenney for your courage, and devotion to God and America, for preserving history with us, and for a job well done.



### SPECIAL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS / OF SPECIAL INTEREST & UPCOMING EVENTS

>>> **(UPDATED) ATLANTA WW II ROUND TABLE – ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE 2016-2017 CAMPAIGN** "Because of a Bylaw-Technicality, the original report of the Nominating Committee for 2016/2017 Atlanta WW II Round Table Officers was declared invalid. Accordingly the elections of Officers for 2016/2017 will have to be redone after a report is given by a new Nominating Committee, which was appointed by the Executive Committee just after the June 2016 meeting. A new Nominating Committee was formed with our Public Relations Chairwomen Jill Berry as the Committee Chair and elections will take place after it's report is given (in September 2016). Because the Bylaws provide that all Officers serve until their successor is elected, there will be no change of Officers until the September 2016 meeting."

>>> **(NEW) SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2016 (Saturday & Sunday) – Atlanta Warbird Weekend-** The *Commorative Air Force (CAF) Dixie Wing* will be hosting the Atlanta Warbird Weekend on September 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> (Saturday and Sunday). The event is at the Peachtree Dekalb Airport from 10AM – 4PM and is **FREE** to the public ( there is a \$ 10.00 parking fee ). The event celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *AVG Flying Tigers* and there will be three (3) of the surviving Flying Tigers present. Please visit the Website to purchase aircraft rides ( rides are available in a P-51, SBD-5 Dauntless, a P-26 and a LT-6 Mosquito-T-6 Texan ) and to purchase Dinner with the Tigers at [www.AtlantaWarbirdWeekend.com](http://www.AtlantaWarbirdWeekend.com) or call the CAF at (678) 364-1110

>>> **(UPDATED) AIR FORCE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION - Georgia Chapter - MEETING REMINDER**  
The Georgia Chapter of the 8<sup>th</sup> *Air Force Historical Association* is meets monthly at Clairmont Place, 2100 Clairmont Lake Decatur. GA, 30033 (Across the street from the VA hospital on Clairmont Road). This Association meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. Please call Brent Bracewell for additional information at 678-416-5749 or email him at [brent.bracewell@yahoo.com](mailto:brent.bracewell@yahoo.com) or email the Organizations Secretary Marc Feit at [marcfeit@bellsouth.net](mailto:marcfeit@bellsouth.net) to confirm the time and date of their next scheduled meeting.

>>> **(REMINDER) IMMEDIATE - WITNESS-TO-WAR ORGANIZATION AND ATLANTA WW II ROUND TABLE** – I am pleased to announce that the *Witness-To-War. Org* Organization and the Atlanta WW II Round Table have agreed to work closely together as our organizations continue to evolve in 2014-2015. *Witness-To-War Foundation* Director Emily Carley was authorized by her CEO, Tom Beaty, to offer their video and audio recording services at each of our meetings. Emily Carley or Video Specialist Martin Madert will now be recording the Round Table meetings. Veterans from all services and all conflicts are asked to sign-up with Emily or Martin and provide them with their oral histories. These interviews can be done at their extensive studios in Norcross. WTW can also arrange to come to a veteran's home to conduct an interview. You can contact Emily or Martin at our regular meetings or via email: Emily Carley's email: [emily@witnessstowar.org](mailto:emily@witnessstowar.org) and Martin's: [seb@witnessstowar.org](mailto:seb@witnessstowar.org) or by calling Emily at 770-481-3018.

>>> **(UPDATED) UPCOMING SPEAKERS for – September 2016 –March 2017**– Commander & Program Chairman Pete Mecca, with the assistance of the Program Committee, have lined-up some impressive speakers for us for our 2016-2017 campaign: **September 15<sup>th</sup> WW II Veteran and State Representative John Yates** ; October 20<sup>th</sup> – Alan Armstrong - *PLAN JB355, Roosevelt's plan approved in July of 1941 to SECRETLY BOMB JAPAN BEFORE PEARL HARBOR EVER HAPPENED.*; November 17<sup>th</sup> – Raymond Fordyce - 385th Bombardment Group During WWII; December 15<sup>th</sup> – John Wagon – U.S. Navy '*Snippets From my World War II Experiences*'; January 2017 – Greg McClelland – *Hitler's Wolf Laire- 'Inside the Third Reich'*; February 18<sup>th</sup> – Gary Weller – Georgia Airborne Association – WW II Airborne Operations – Beginnings of the Army Airborne; March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – William 'Billy' McDonald - *Flying Tigers - The Wingman for Chennault*. Please note that the speaker's engagements are subject to change. Thank-You Pete & Deputy Commander Lindsay for taking on this very difficult endeavor and for your continuing efforts to seek-out and engage excellent speakers for our meetings. Should any member have a suggestion or lead for Pete relative to a qualified Speaker, please contact Commander Mecca at 770-354-9697 or via email at [petemecca@gmail.com](mailto:petemecca@gmail.com)

Monthly Quote:

"Solvency is maintained by means of a national debt, on the principle, If you will not lend me the money, how can I pay you?"  
English Traits (1856), reprinted in *The Prose Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 2