



THE HETTEMA GROUP



THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM

Feature News Release

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WWII Bonds Pasadena Father and Son

Beyond All Boundaries
Brings New Understanding
Across Generations

Pasadena, CA -- When The Hettema Group was commissioned by the National World War II Museum in New Orleans to design and produce *Beyond All Boundaries*, a multi-sensory cinematic experience about WWII, Phil Hettema knew exactly who to turn to first: his dad.

Dave Hettema, 86, served as a B-17 pilot in the Army Air Forces during WWII. He completed 35 successful combat missions in the "Flying Fortress" flying from England over Germany, in 1945. He was 21 years old.

Of his distinguished military service, Dave said simply, "We had a job to do, and we did it."

"And, in doing that, he helped to change history," said Phil. "He helped define 'the American Spirit,' the America that emerged after WWII: an America that does the right thing, stands up for the right things; that's the image that we like to carry of ourselves, that we aspire to."

“He didn’t talk about his time in the service when I was growing up,” said Phil, “until the family went to an air show in Chino in the 1980s, and saw a B-17. He climbed onboard the plane with us and started to open up about what it was like to pilot a B-17 over Germany, including the realization he might not come back.” Around that time, Dave started to attend reunions of WWII veterans.

“I still do!” Dave said proudly.

Over the past few years, Dave has shared more of his WWII experiences with Phil, contributing to an exhaustive research effort spanning more than 6,000 hours by the film’s creative team. “It’s been a thrill for me to work with Phil, to be able to tell my own story, and contribute to *Beyond All Boundaries*,” said Dave.

“My dad’s story is emblematic of literally millions of guys. What they did, what they accomplished – it’s hard to conceive of today, the sacrifice of an entire generation and of our entire country.

Beyond All Boundaries provides that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to tell a story like that. I can’t think of another story of such significance,” said Phil, who serves as Show Producer and Creative Director. “While the scale of the war is massive, my dad, along with 44 others, helped to provide a very personal perspective on an epic, global story.”

One of Dave’s most powerful memories, an epiphany, is dramatically recounted in the film: “I was sitting in the pilot’s seat in the midst of a ‘Massive Effort’ involving 2,000 aircraft flying together in formation on a mission to bomb Hitler’s Germany. Looking ahead, I saw hundreds and hundreds of aircraft in front of us. I turned around, and saw just as many all the way to the horizon. And I thought of all the people back home who did all they could to get these planes in the air. Every single aircraft was made by someone back home. And in that moment, I felt they were with us. All of America was a part of this ‘Massive Effort’ helping to turn the tide of the war.”

When he wasn’t flying, Dave enjoyed drawing cartoons, and created the colorful “Super Mouse” character proudly displayed on the nose of their B-17 aircraft. His cartoons and artwork have been featured in several books on WWII.

After 35 successful missions, Dave had finished his job in the war effort and returned home to Pasadena, California, where he has lived most of his life. What did he do next? "I married Norma, Phil's mother!" Dave said with a grin. It was February of 1945.

And he got a job as a photo engraver with the local daily newspaper, the ***Pasadena Star News***.

On Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, August 15, 1945, celebrations took place across the United States. In Pasadena, right outside the *Pasadena Star News* office, where the red trolley cars ran along Colorado Boulevard, Dave remembers "the streets were suddenly full of cars all honking their horns; people were gathering and shouting for joy... Many started tearing up their war ration coupons and throwing them up in the air like confetti. And of course," he laughed, "it wasn't until the next day, that they realized still needed them."

The epic production, a five-year project – from concept to design and production -- by The Hetteema Group's creative team incorporates state-of-the-art special effects immersing the audience in a unique cinematic experience. With life-sized props, animation, and atmospherics, as well as archival footage and sound effects, audiences will feel the tank treads rumbling across North Africa's deserts, brush snow from their cheeks during the wintry Battle of the Bulge, and flinch at anti-aircraft fire as it tries to bring down *their* B-17 on a bombing run over Nazi Germany.

"As a storyteller in the entertainment business, it's really satisfying to tell a story whose main purpose is not entertainment," Phil noted. "We hope to reach a new generation with this presentation, in a way that make people think about what happened, and walk away with their own point of view about war. The cost of the war itself is hard to fathom.

"65 million lives were lost – that's a number that never ceases to astound people. One we hope they will not forget," said Phil. Dave firmly agreed.

Featuring Tom Hanks as Executive Producer and narrator, *Beyond All Boundaries* opens November 7, 2009 at the National World War II Museum's Solomon Victory Theater, in New Orleans (www.nationalww2museum.org). True stories of 44 individuals in the film are voiced by 30 well-known actors including Kevin Bacon, Patricia Clarkson, James Cromwell, Blythe Danner, Viola Davis, Jennifer Garner, John Goodman, Neil Patrick Harris, Tobey Maguire, Chris Pine, Brad Pitt, and Gary Sinise, among others.

Of the 44 individuals whose WWII stories are featured, six are still living.

Hettemas in Pasadena

Not only has Dave been a Pasadenan since he was a child, and raised his own children in Pasadena, the Hettema family's Pasadena connections today include Phil's company, The Hettema Group, located in Old Pasadena; and Phil's brother, Pete, is a Lieutenant with the Pasadena Police Department. All of his grandparents resided in Pasadena, and his grandfather, Peter Solem, was a founding member of the Pasadena Covenant Church, and was one of the builders of the church, as well.

The Hettema Group (THG), founded by Phil Hettema in 2002, specializes in creative design, production and architecture for the world of experiential entertainment, including museums, visitor centers, theme parks, and resort destinations. For more, see www.thehettemagroup.com.

The National World War II Museum tells the story of the American Experience in the war that changed the world – why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today. Dedicated in 2000 as The National D-Day Museum and now designated by Congress as America's National World War II Museum, it celebrates the American Spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who fought on the battlefield and the Home Front. For more information, call 877-813-3329 or 504-527-6012 or visit www.nationalww2museum.org. Follow us on Twitter at [WWIImuseum](https://twitter.com/WWIImuseum) or visit our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WWIImuseum) fan page.

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Editors note: Photos and interviews available on request.