

Veteran of the Month May 2009

Congratulations to Harold "Had" Taylor!



In partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission, we are pleased to present the May, 2009 Veteran of the Month Recognition to Harold "Had" Taylor.

Harold "Had" Taylor entered active duty in the United States Army Air Corp on December 3, 1942 during World War II, from his home town of Cranston, Rhode Island. He received his formal gunner training in Texas and continued training in various locations in the United States.

During a bombing mission to Bad Voslau Austria on April 12, 1944, Master Sergeant Taylors' B24 Liberator was shot down south of Vienna by a squadron of ME 110 fighters. During the aerial flight MSgt Taylors' leg was impaled by a metal fragment for which he received a Purple Heart. He was captured by an Austrian Corporal and held as a prisoner of war at Stalag XVII-B in Krems Austria along with approximately four thousand other enlisted fliers. Prior to being liberated, his captors forced him and his fellow prisoners of war on a two and a half week march over 180 kilometers away from the Russians and towards the Bavarian border. On May 3, 1945, MSgt Taylor was liberated by General Patton's 13th Armored Division. On September 24, 1945, MSgt Taylor was discharged from the Army Air Corp.

On February 10, 1948, MSgt Taylor heard the calling of his country and reentered the military. He joined the recently formed United States Air Force and in March of 1948, arrived at Weaver AFB, South Dakota, now known as Ellsworth AFB. From this date, until his retirement on April 30, 1965, MSgt Taylor served as a tail gunner on the B29 Superfortress, the B36 Peacemaker and he was a part of the B52H Stratofortress program while stationed at Minot AFB.

During MSgt Taylor's distinguished career, he received numerous medals and awards including the Purple Heart, Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Prisoner of War Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with silver know, American Campaign Medal, American Defense Medal, European -African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (ETO) with three bronze stars, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Longevity Service Award with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Graduation ribbon and the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Military Education Ribbon.

Following his retirement MSgt Taylor was a salesman for Rapid City Chevrolet, selling cars, trucks and motor homes for twenty years. MSgt was married to Rose Mary who passed away after 22 years of marriage. His second marriage of 37 years was with Beverly, who passed away a few years ago. MSgt Taylor has three step-children, three grand children and five great grand children.

SMSgt Taylor epitomizes the military philosophy and patriotism to his country. He is indeed a true hero and we are pleased to recognize Harold "Had" Taylor as the May 2009 Veteran of the Month.