

93-Year-Old WWII Vet Nears Completion of Monumental Sculpture

On 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, statues honor American aviators who lost their lives

BOULDER, Colo. — Nov. 3, 2015— On the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II —and almost 100 years after the first Veterans Day— 93-year-old retired Maj. Fredric Arnold, sole surviving member of his original Group of P-38 Fighter Pilots from the Class of 42-J and a renowned artist, has finished the clay sculpture “Lest We Forget: The Mission,” that will be cast to create a life-size, 12-figure, 20x22-foot bronze mission briefing scene. In honor of his fallen WWII comrades, Arnold’s Veterans Day mission is to complete the bronze sculpture.

The dramatic sculpture was inspired by memories of 12 comrades lost during the war. The project has taken Arnold more than five years to date. A true national memorial when completed, the sculpture’s message is endorsed by retired Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, a WWII combat veteran and former national chairman of the WWII Memorial, along with three former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Gen. Colin Powell, Gen. Richard Myers and Gen. Peter Pace.

“Much more than art, this sculpture conveys an important message to our fellow Americans – a message about the determination and sacrifices exhibited by a generation, crafted by one who was actually there on the battle lines,” said Sen. Dole. “We all owe a debt of gratitude to those men and women who bravely stepped up to the challenge of World War II and made the ultimate sacrifice. Their heroism will never be forgotten.”

Molds were taken of the 12 clay figures in preparation for bronze casting and the first figure has been cast in bronze. Contributions from individuals, businesses and others will be needed to cast, assemble and transport the 11 remaining life-size bronze statues.

“This is the project of a lifetime for my father,” said Marc Arnold, Fredric’s son. “He felt it was his purpose and personal responsibility to ensure that future generations understand the great sacrifice and selfless contributions his brave comrades made in World War II.”

Following completion, the sculpture will be loaned to The National WWII Museum where it will be displayed on the Museum’s six-acre campus.

To learn about the project, see images of the finished clay figures and learn how you can help, visit LestWeForgetSculpture.org.

About Maj. Fredric Arnold (Ret.)

Maj. Fredric Arnold (Ret.), 93, is not only a decorated veteran of 50 missions as a P-38 Lightning fighter pilot during World War II, but also an inventor, actor, entrepreneur, author and, most significantly, an artist and sculptor of renown. Among many distinctions in his long life, he invented the aluminum folding chair; was cast in several movies and television shows and wrote a highly successful autobiographical novel titled “Doorknob Five-Two,” his radio call sign during the war. He lives in Colorado with his wife of 70 years.