

**Cole Land Transportation Museum**  
**Essay Contest Winners**  
**November 11, 2010**

**Category "B" – Grades 9-12 (High School)**

**Third Place Winner - \$300 Savings Bond**

✓ Annie Hare – Former Student of Nannette Mills @ Hodgdon HS  
Freshman @ Unity College  
Veteran: Louis Tonero (could not attend)

**Second Place Winner - \$400 Savings Bond**

Alexander Eremita - Former Student of Tim Thornton @ Brewer HS  
Freshman @ Johnson & Wales College in Denver, CO  
Essay being read by teacher, Tim Thornton  
Veteran: Marty Bell (working today – could not attend)

**First Place Winner - \$500 Savings Bond**

Jacob Valley – Student of Jon Cyr @ Brewer HS  
Veterans: John Moore & Paul Lucey

**Category "A" – Grades 6-8 (Middle School)**

**Third Place Winner - \$300 Savings Bond**

JW Harriman - Student of Belinda Gauvin @ Bucksport Middle School  
Veteran: Norman Rossignol - RICHARD HARRIMAN

**Second Place Winner - \$400 Savings Bond**

Cora Bishop – 8<sup>th</sup> grade student of Bill Prest @ Acadia Christian School  
Veteran: Richard Giffard

**First Place Winner - \$500 Savings Bond**

Meg Nadeau – 8<sup>th</sup> grade student of Linda Voss @ Winslow Jr High  
Veteran: Earle Aucoin

What Freedom Means To Me  
After Interviewing A Veteran

Annie Hare

Hodgdon High School

Teacher: Nan Mills

Veteran: Louis Tonero

## "What Freedom Means to Me after Interviewing a Veteran"

When I was younger I would go with my grandmother to place flags on veteran's graves. She went to a few different cemeteries to honor the fallen. My sister and I placed the flags careful not to step on the graves or on the stones set in the ground. My sister wanted to place the most flags in the shortest time and wanted me to race her but I always said no. I would read the name on each stone and then repeat it in a whisper and say thank you as I stuck the flag holder into the ground. My Gram seemed to do the same. My Grampy and uncle were in the military. I talked to both of them about their times in the service. My grandfather worked on a coding ship in the Navy and my uncle was a dog handler in the Army. My grandfather was in WWII and was near Pearl Harbor at the time of the Japanese attacks.

The veteran I interviewed was Louis Tenero, originally from a small town in New Jersey. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps for four years and then the U.S. National Guard for twenty years. He was in the Vietnam War. He was the crew chief of his helicopter, a CH46 that is still in use today. He was basically the mechanic and person that kept the helicopter running. His copter would fly back and forth to the nearby ship and carry in/out troops and supplies. They would fly into combat areas to drop off c-rations, medical supplies, "fresh" soldiers and artillery. These helicopters would hold approx. 22 people. They dropped off squadrons into an area to be patrolled.

The runners on the helicopter wore flight suits and chicken mesh, like a light chain mail, that was a quarter inch thick. The helicopter was armed with two guns for defensive fire. His crew stayed on-ship and didn't have to endure the hardships of the jungle but still were taught self-defense and jungle survival. Louis received a cracked tailbone in a "hard" landing. He was 24 when he enlisted because he had to take care of his sick mother when he was younger. At the end of his career in the Marines he left on good terms and then transferred into the National Guard.

Freedom is something not to be taken lightly. Many other people do not have the privileges that

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we do as a land of the free. I don't know what I would do without my freedom. I'd like to thank every person that had anything to do with gaining what we have today. I went to the mobile memorial wall a few years ago and got to listen to a few veterans stories of being prisoners of war and of men that went missing. I can't imagine the conditions they dealt with. Two years ago I did my sophomore exhibition on POWs and discovered many disturbing things that were done to the American prisoners and of the places they stayed. My heart gets tugged each time I hear of a soldier killed in Iraq or in any part of the world because they died fighting for the greater good. Talking to the veterans in both of the trips I have been on to the Cole's Museum have opened my eyes and I have learned more each time. I will not take my freedom for granted ever for the rest of my life.

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Alexander Eremita

Category B

Brewer High School

Mr. Thornton

Marty Bell

Thomas Jefferson once said, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." Our country has been sustained for over two-hundred and thirty years now, and much blood has been spilled to keep it safe. The worth of a possession one owns is usually put into the terms of the price one has paid for it, or in the case of a possession one does not own, the price that one is willing to pay. Freedom to me means a lot of things, but after interviewing a veteran it means sacrifice more than anything. And understanding the value of that sacrifice is key to keeping freedom alive. But how can we as Americans, understand or appreciate the value of that sacrifice if we don't realize and exercise our freedoms and rights that the sacrifice is made for?

Freedom has changed a lot throughout American history, in America's early years as a nation, only white land-owning men could vote. Today all people born as United States citizens and are eighteen or over have the right to vote. Being able to vote in REAL elections is one of our greatest freedoms. Our system of government ultimately puts the people in charge because even though we don't make the laws, we get to decide on who can. It is extremely important for a government to be subservient to the people. Freedom cannot exist for all unless this is so. History has shown us that humanity is capable of horrible things, the only way to keep too much power from going to one person or group is to give a little bit of power to everyone so that those in power are held accountable for their actions. And that is exactly what the vote does; holding leaders accountable for their actions ensures that they make decisions that benefit the people, not themselves.

But this isn't enough, people should only vote if they are well informed. America has a huge media and press industry that offers many different perspectives on different issues. Being able to freely access information is something most of us don't think about, especially people my

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age. With the development of the internet and social networking sites within it, a global pool of unlimited information is literally right at our fingertips. This is fantastic, as long as real, credible and factual information is used; the internet allows us to learn faster than we ever have or perhaps even thought possible, but only if we use it that way. It is our responsibility as citizens to understand how our government works to the best of our ability, and to keep up with modern events and developments as well as our past, because the events of today soon become the past of tomorrow. Our government has not been stagnant these past two hundred and thirty years; it changes and evolves when necessary. This evolution comes through our education and experience as a nation, if we don't learn from our past we are doomed to repeat it. This is why it is important to go to school, and watch the news, and interview veterans. So that we may not only understand our responsibilities and obligations, but fulfill them as well. This is why a right to an education and access to information is one of our most important freedoms.

In support of this we all have the right to criticize and complain about our government. Being an informed and educated citizen is great and all, but what is the point of being educated and informed if you can't express your opinions? To promote or prevent change, the best and most effective way is for there to be a large number of people supporting the cause centered on said change. In order to make the government see a problem or be forced to acknowledge it, it is necessary for people to gather together to petition or ask for a redress of their grievances as a group of individuals fighting for a common interest.

One of our most important freedoms is the right to a fair trial, and that we cannot be forced to incriminate ourselves. By law we are innocent until proven guilty, in some places it is the other way around. Most of our laws are fair and reasonable because of many of the aforementioned freedoms that we have; lawmakers cannot make laws that would restrict these

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freedoms. Therefore it is easier to be content with the laws we must obey, understanding that most of the laws and rules that we follow are centered on protecting or expanding or the freedoms we have been given. In addition to this I think we can say we have fair and effective police and emergency response organizations. One of the easiest and most important things we take for granted is the overall sense of safety and peace of mind that we enjoy, to live without fear. And not just fear from criminals either, our military force and safeguards protect us from most foreign attacks. There is no such thing as being one hundred percent safe, but we are certainly a lot safer than people who live in third world countries.

There is no Church of the United States of America, there never has or will be because of our first amendment to the constitution. We all have the freedom to believe in whatever we wish, no matter how ridiculous or sane, as long as it does not interfere with someone else's right to believe what they want. This is one of the greatest freedoms because it allows all of us to develop a moral code of our choice. Whether that is through a God, Gods and Goddesses or no higher power at all is entirely up to every individual. And it is highly important that everyone thinks and acts as an individual, it gives all of us the right to forge our own destinies and live our own lives as we desire, and that perhaps may be the greatest freedom of them all.

Finally, what protects all of these freedoms? What if the government or some other threat became too powerful? The founding fathers created the second amendment for that very purpose. The right to own a gun is a very unique and uncommon right, we are one of the only countries that allow firearm possession, and it is the right of *every* citizen. Every dictatorship in history has had guns or weapons taken away from the people, so they have no means to revolt. As long as people are still allowed to own guns and understand why it is important to own a gun, our other freedoms cannot be taken from us without a fight. In addition to this firearms are a part of

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America's recreational lifestyle, many people shoot or hunt simply for pleasure, one more freedom that guns provide.

In the end we have to ask ourselves, "Is the sacrifice worthwhile?" As long as all these freedoms remain intact I will continue to say, "Yes." But this goes beyond just the people who live here in America. Many other countries that have instituted new governments have molded their constitution, bill of rights and overall principles off of those that we laid down over two hundred years ago. We have a responsibility to the rest of the world as well, not just ourselves to promote and act on the ideals we believe. We must be the shining example to the rest of the world and continue to show, that the only way to truly live happily and be successful is to live free from all forms of oppression. As long as we do this, the sacrifice of those patriots is not in vain, and perhaps someday the tree of liberty will not need to be refreshed with blood, but with peace and prosperity.

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**Jacob Valley**

**Category "B"**

**Brewer High School**

**Mr. Cyr**

**John Moore and Paul Lucey**

### **"What Freedom Means To Me After Interviewing A Veteran"**

A society born with citizens containing fire in their minds is a society that strives for freedom. The only thing that will obtain it, is the will to fight unconditionally. Is there such a race that will lay down everything, even the ultimate sacrifice of human life to have freedom for its people? Will people be so willing to lose their lives so that others will have the luxury of the freedom they fought for? The answers to these questions, which I have always hoped were yes, I now know to be true. After interviewing the very men who took it upon themselves to enter the fight for freedom, knowing ahead of time the price that may be paid, I now believe in the man who will fight unconditionally.

Two of those men I had the utmost privilege of having a conversation with, Paul Lucey and John Moore. Both Mr. Lucey and Mr. Moore were your average man before war. However, they did not have the young life that I, and many other Americans, have today. For them, freedom was running short, and almost ran out. They were called upon to answer the most important calls of their lives, and like many other brave young men, they accepted it with freedom in their hearts and in their minds. They went to far away lands, fought hard battles, and witnessed lives being lost and taken. They never let this slow them down, but rather fuel them as they fought harder. The reason that these men were never defeated in the battle for the ultimate goal was because they knew what they were fighting for. They were fighting for me, for you. They were fighting for countless generations that they had never met, and would never meet. They knew this all too well, but didn't miss a step when running on the battlefield, or flying through the air above hostile territory. It was this dedication, this patriotism, and these young brave Americans that gave me the right to stand on my own two feet today and say that I am free. I am forever in their debt.

I now sit and listen to the stories of these well respected men. They have seen what most will never see or could begin to imagine. Most young Americans look at them with filled wonder in their eyes trying to fathom what they have experienced. It is not possible though, because what these men,

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what all American veterans have experienced, is so personal, and so unbelievably horrific and awesome, that the true experiences of the war will be lost forever with them. However, while these great men enjoy their lives they tell their stories of their stand for freedom, we can only hope to take in all we can, and pass on all we can.

In reality these men are immortal. They will forever live in all those who are born free in the world. They gave them their lives, so the new children could live free, and they now will indefinitely live through them. These veterans, these Americans, will live through freedom in everyones hearts, everyones minds, and their stories will echo across time as long as the bell of freedom rings.

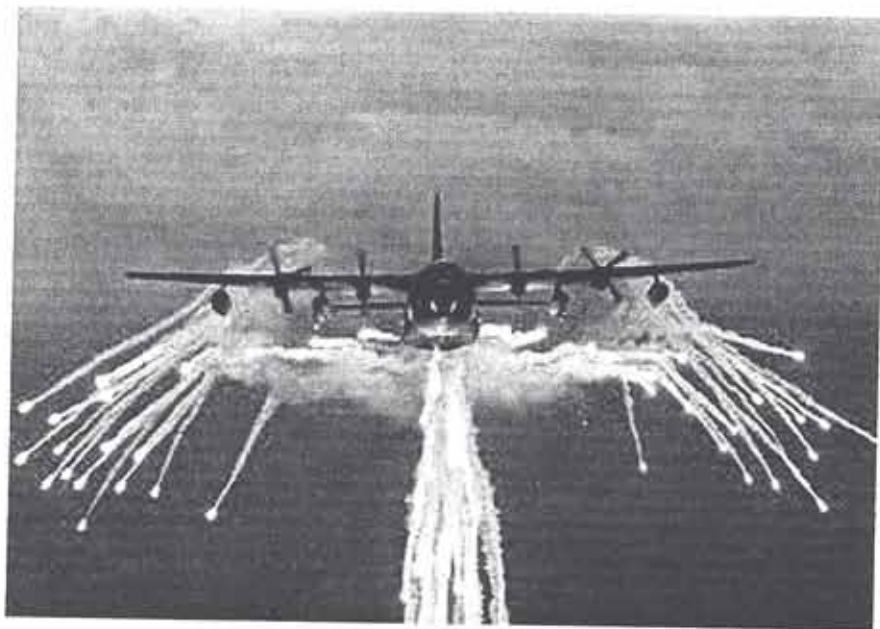


What Freedom Means to Me  
After Interviewing a Veteran

By Jw Harriman

Bucksport Middle School

October 28, 2010



## What Freedom means To Me After Interviewing a Veteran

I was lucky enough to interview two men who served in two separate wars to protect our country. But these two men had totally different experiences.

One of these men was an infantry man named Norm Rossignol. He was drafted in the U.S. Army in 1943 at the age of 18 to serve in WWII. He took advanced infantry training. After all this he landed on Omaha beach 32 days after D-Day. The beach was strewn with bodies. A heart breaking sight but they marched on. You never knew when German troops would ambush you.

One close call came when Norm and his buddies walked onto a land mine which killed some men and injured some others and Norm. Many would have lain down and given up but not Mr. Rossignol. He got up and administered first aid to those who

needed it, then he ran for the medics and took the injured to safety. He said he was really mad and scared. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple heart for his bravery.

I asked him what freedom means to him. He said that some people can't express themselves and are not treated fairly. That's why he feels that freedom is worth fighting for.

The second veteran I interviewed was my dad, Richard Harriman. He was 19 years old and working in the Bucksport Mill just after he graduated from high school. In June 1966, he got a draft notice to serve in the Vietnam War. Since he already had his pilot's license, he decided to enlist in the Air Force as a Flight Engineer and Load Master. His job included loading the airplane with cargo, checking the weight and balance of the airplane, monitoring the fuel consumption and checking aircraft log books. After training, he was sent to Vietnam to join the crew of a C-130E transport airplane.

They transported many things in Vietnam. They had to move badly injured soldiers and the dead in body bags which were very difficult to see. They transported food and ammo to remote airstrips. Once they flew to a remote area to pick up some South Vietnamese with their pigs, cows and carts and took them to another area where they disappeared into the jungle.

They were shot at many times. Bullets went through the airplane and hit the crew. My dad was hit in the shoulder. During night flights they could see the tracers coming at them. The sky was lit up red with all the tracers. Dad hated fireworks after that. I think I might be the same way too if that had happened to me.

One close call my dad had was when they had to drop supplies in bad weather. They were flying in a formation of five C-130Es. The first two planes hit the side of the plateau. My dad was in the third plane which pulled up sharply to avoid a collision



and an explosion. I feel amazed and grateful that Dad and his crew could react so quickly to avoid disaster.

In Bangkok, there were lots of snakes. While doing the preflight check, Dad opened a metal case and saw a gigantic cobra. He slammed the lid shut and went to get a crewmate with a fire extinguisher. They opened the lid and the cobra reared up, but he never got a chance to strike. They iced him and he froze in that pose.

Unlike Norm who got a hero's welcome, when my dad came home, people yelled and jeered at him when they saw his uniform. He said he felt like taking his uniform off just to escape the torment. I feel that people should realize that my dad and all the soldiers were doing their duty for our country. They were doing what they were told to do. They should be honored for their service.

I am grateful that they fought to give me freedom. I learned that war is brutal. My dad said we should take our

responsibility to vote very seriously so we can elect strong people to lead our country. He also said we should look at what a person has done not only at what they say they will do. Whether we believe in a war or not, we should always honor our veterans who have sacrificed so much in service to our country.

Cora Bishop

Category A

Acadia Christian School

William Prest

Mr. Richard Giffard

### A Soldier

The town common, filled with dozens of people holding American flags, was silent that afternoon.

"He's coming," said a man, and the people rushed to the curb on Main Street. They stood with hands over their hearts in lines that stretched for blocks.

They watched as the hearse, carrying the body of a American soldier, paused under a giant flag, hanging from the extended ladders of the fire trucks, and made its way to the church. A church bell clanged in the distance.

The soldier was killed in Iraq. At the church, the soldier was remembered as a humble, honest, and dependable man, and as a soldier, his devotion to duty surprised no one.

"When I remember the soldier, I remember a fifteen-year-old boy who would always talk to me," said an elderly woman. "His eyes would sparkle. It was impossible not to like him."

"He gave his all- all the time. But he did that with everything in life," said a close friend. "He was a go-to guy."

As the mourners left the church, they made the short walk to the cemetery. There several soldiers fired a rifle volley, and bagpipers played "Amazing Grace." I felt a sense of fear, despair, hope, joy, and heroism. Soldiers face the dangers of war daily. They clean up "messes" in this world. For them, I feel pride and humility, for they are a friend to America's freedom.

However, I still have many questions that I need answered about America and freedom, and on a Wednesday in September, Mr. Richard Giffard gave me many answers to many questions.

Mr. Richard Giffard was a Brewer boy, who loved sports, especially football, basketball, and baseball. When the Korean War started, he was drafted. His first job was rifle instructor. Later, he did get to Korea and was stationed at the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea.

Next, he spent two tours in Vietnam. He was a battalion sergeant in charge of building communication centers. In June 1969, he was wounded at a fire base, but even though he was wounded, he continued to help the most seriously wounded and brought them to safety. For Mr. Giffard's actions, he received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

After his second tour in Vietnam, Mr. Giffard returned to the United States, and sadly, he found that soldiers were not received well back in the United States. But Mr. Giffard continued in the Army, and many happier things occurred in his future. Perhaps, the greatest was his family, for his wife and he adopted two children.

Thank you Mr. Giffard. Clearly, I now can see that American freedom has come at a great cost. America's freedom has been paid over many centuries with hundreds of thousands of lives. Even when

America has not been at war, Americans have stood watch during peace to make America safer and more secure.

America is the land of the free. It established early its history of freedoms like life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Today, these freedoms are not known in many countries of the world.

Because of freedom, no other country in the world presents such great opportunities as does the United States. Yes, America has flaws and shortcomings because it has people. However, we are working hard to overcome them. Mr. Giffard's eyes showed that America gives hope and excitement that America and the world can be better places. America's ideals, values, and beliefs in freedom have done much to ease the hardships in this imperfect world.

So today, thanks to Mr. Giffard, I have a responsibility to keep America free. I will help America by volunteering for different groups. I will keep informed on current events, express my opinions to my representatives, and when I am old enough, I will vote in elections. America's freedoms are nothing to be ashamed of. Rather they are something to be cared for and to be proud of.

Thank you, Sergeant Major Richard E. Giffard. I applaud and cheer people like you. You have my admiration and respect. I know what it means with a lump in my throat and a chill in my spine- and then wipe away a tear- when I reflect on those Americans who have done so much for me.

Meg Nadeau

Category A

Winslow Junior High School

Mrs. Linda Voss

Earle Aucoin

December 7, 1941. That date brings back a lot of memories to a lot of people. To Earle Aucoin, it means enlisting in the navy. When hearing the horrible news about the bombing of Pearl Harbor over the college radio that night, the young 19-year-old's bright blue eyes widened in disbelief. Enraged at this horrible event, Earle felt like it was his duty to serve his country, not realizing that this decision would steal away his young-adult life and change him forever.

He has been on the Razorback submarine now for 300 days straight, only stopping once every 60 days. Earle feels like a prisoner of his own ship. It's 2 a.m., and his eyes are becoming heavy with sleep. The only thing that keeps him awake is knowing that if he surrenders to the sweet temptations of dreams, he could be responsible for everybody's death. Tonight he is on radar duty. He looks out of the little porthole and sees the dolphins are still following his submarine. Looking up at the clock, he notes they have been following him for about 3 hours. He is mesmerized by their graceful movements and carefree attitude. Earle's daydream is abruptly interrupted by the sharp squeals of the giddy dolphins. Not thinking anything of it, Earle looks down at the radar, seeing nothing wrong. He tries to settle back into his thoughts, but the squeals become louder and more ear piercing. He feels like they are sensing something that he can't. Trusting in the dolphins, Earle makes a difficult decision to turn the submarine around. Just as he is maneuvering the vessel around, a signal pops up on the radar screen signaling a torpedo heading straight at his sub. Sweat starts trickling down his forehead into his eyes, making them sting. He is successful in turning around in time to get out of the way of the torpedo. Thankfully, Earle trusted in those beautiful animals or that split second in time would have turned into many lives being lost. Now you might understand why the navy calls themselves "Brothers of the Dolphins."

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It is another long night on the submarine and for some reason Earle can't sleep, thinking of another long year ahead of him. Afraid he would wake up his buddy sleeping next to him, Earle heads for the ship's deck. Looking out over the horizon, he witnesses an array of extravagant colors ranging from electric yellow to dulling purple as the sun rises, getting ready for a new day. He thinks back to when the sunrise meant nothing to him, but now he considers himself lucky for each sunrise he witnesses because that night he might not see the sunset. Suddenly, he feels a hand on his shoulder, startling him. Looking over his shoulder, he sees a worried face staring back, telling him they have spotted a Japanese plane and need to submerge immediately. In one minute the submarine is 60 feet under water. Nobody is allowed to talk or make any sounds, but every time a bomb parades down into the deep waters, small gasps escape their mouths, impossible to be stifled. A sudden lurch, and a loud noise comes through the thick walls of the submarine. Even though it's dark, Earle knows everybody's eyes are reflecting fear, including his own. Everybody knows what is happening, but nobody can speak. Several painstaking hours and many close disasters later, the bombers leave and the Razorback re-surfaces. Thankfully the damage isn't too bad, but if they hadn't gotten down fast enough, it could have been a lot worse. Once again if one little thing had gone wrong, the entire crew would have been killed.

After about 4 years on the Razorback, Earle Aucoin has almost lost his life several times. He has experienced things no young man should. Everything is about to change. The war has ended, and today Japan is going to sign the formal surrender. Getting ready for this spectacular occasion, Earle looks at himself in the little mirror of the submarine's bathroom. He notices how straight he stands, how pronounced his jaw line is and realizes that the reflection looking back at him is a man. Not just a man, but a man who survived World War II, and saved an entire crew, a



man who is full of nothing but pride--pride for his country, pride for sinking 16 Japanese ships or subs, pride for surviving 4 years on a submarine. As he emerges into the bright light of the afternoon sun, he feels tears swelling in his eyes. He looks around at his crew mates who have been like brothers for this long journey and thinks about how much he'll miss them. He feels a sense of calm and great pride knowing the formal surrender is being signed at this moment.

It's September 30, 2010 at the Cole Land Transportation Museum, and I can still see the pride and love for his country radiating from the 87-year-old veteran's blue eyes. Even now, they become teary as he recalls the stories from the time he served his country. And now my own teary eyes look through his, and I see into his soul and realize what freedom really is. It is the love and pride American veterans have for their country and the sacrifices they made. As I turn to leave, Earle's shaky hand slides a piece of paper toward me. My eyes focus on the second stanza of the poem, "In Flanders Field":

"We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved and were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders Field"

These words speak to my heart of that great love-freedom.