



# ***REFLECTIONS***

August 29, 2010

**Greater love has no one than this, that he lay  
down his life for his friends.**

*John 15:13*

## **An Uncle I Never Knew**

The memory of him is faint if indeed I have a memory of him at all. I was little more than a babe when 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard Stanton went off to war as a newly married man. He took Aunt Mary Beth as his bride on June 16, 1942, a few days before he shipped out to serve in the Pacific theater of World War II. He didn't return.

Lt. Stanton was a P-38 fighter pilot who trained at Victory Field just outside the city limits of the small town where my grandparents lived. Aunt Mary Beth, a 19-year old beauty queen, would drive out to watch the planes land with her convertible top down. Once, she took me with her and I remember one of the flyboys coming to the car where she was parked. It was probably Richard.

It really doesn't matter whether my recall is drawn from my memories as a three year-old boy or from pictures painted by my imagination from stories I was told. Either way they are true, and Richard Stanton is still a hero to me. I kept a picture of a P-38 in my room for years and I would proudly showoff the set of lapel wings he gave me. I cried bitter tears when I lost them.

I remember one day my dad told me that Richard had been reported missing in action. As a boy not yet four, I couldn't understand why they were unable to find him. I have wondered how he died for all these years. Was it in combat or was it a fault in the plane he flew; and how was it that no one witnessed his fate? Recently, I learned the answer.

September 2, 1943 Lt. Richard B. Stanton from Chicago, Illinois was a passenger aboard a B-24 on an engineering test flight. The last communication with the plane was noted at 3:00 on that fateful afternoon. The search for the missing aircraft produced identifiable parts of the plane that confirmed it had gone down at sea either from bad weather conditions or pilot error. And so the case is now closed.

Richard Stanton was an uncle I never knew, but he has always been a hero in my eyes. Like so many others called to serve in theaters of war—those who returned and those who did not—he was willing to give his life for the cause of liberty. I am forever grateful to him and all the others for our quality of life made possible by their sacrifices.

But I have a greater hero. His name is Jesus the Christ. God called him into the world to sacrifice his life so we might never die. From his sacrifice, we look forward to life that is yet to come. And I praise God for it.

*“You are the light of the world.”*

*Richard* +

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