



For Immediate Release

Witness History as Doolittle Raiders Honored with "Final Goblet" Ceremony

Hosted by the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce and Northwest Florida State College (Home of the Raiders)

(FORT WALTON BEACH, FL - February 8, 2022), On April 18, 2022, the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce will host the "Final Goblet" a ceremony that will mark the passing of Doolittle Raider, Col. Richard E. "Dick" Cole. Since April 1947, a ceremonial "roll call" has honored the eighty Doolittle Raiders. Cole and all of the members of Doolittle Raiders were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in May 2014 "for outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States in conducting their bombings of Tokyo." Many historians' credit the raid as the critical factor of the Japanese defeat at the Battle of Midway, often cited as the turning point in the Pacific war.

Col. Richard E. "Dick" Cole's son, Retired Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Rich Cole shares this statement from the family, "The Cole family is deeply honored and appreciative of the Okaloosa County Community hosting the Goblet Ceremony for our Dad, Col. Richard E. "Dick" Cole, on April 18, 2022. As the last member of this historic mission to pass away, the turning of his goblet signifies the passing of the generation of men and women who were willing to stand against tyranny and evil at any cost. It is a bittersweet moment. While there is great sadness at their passing, there is also a great celebration of their sacrifice and the legacy of their courage. We are thankful to celebrate this moment in the city where it all began."

Scheduled to be held at the Northwest Florida State College, special guests include invited attendees, Raider family members, government officials, and military dignitaries. Eighty active duty airmen from Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field will sit among family members to represent each Doolittle Raider during the ceremony.

Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce President, Ted Corcoran, provides insight into what hosting the historical event means to the local community, "Fort Walton/Okaloosa County has had a front-row seat for everything Doolittle Raiders. From their initial training in March 1942 to their reunions in 1957 and 1968 to the training re-enactment Homecoming at Duke Field we scheduled in 2008 to their 71st Final Reunion in 2013—it has been an amazing adoration from our community. We have numerous roads, buildings, and of course, the NWF State College Raiders— all named in their honor. We were so lucky to have Lt Col Dick Cole return several times after that final reunion—with visits to the Bases and Armament Museum. The silver goblets created by the citizens of Tucson, AZ, in 1959, is arguably one of the most significant traditions in all World War II soldier history. For our community to have the opportunity to witness the Final Goblet is so bittersweet—indeed the end of a history of Legends 80 years after the raid—and one last chance for us all to pass along the story of the Raiders to our grandchildren."

For more details, visit www.fwbchamber.org/Doolittleraiders. Tickets will be available online beginning March 7, 2022, at www.mattiekellyartscenter.org.

This event is sponsored by the following outstanding Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce Members: Bank of England Mortgage, Bit-Wizards, Eglin Federal Credit Union, Emerald Coast Harley Davidson, Florida Power and Light, Image Printing and Digital Services, MAG Aerospace, Manor at Bluewater Bay, Okaloosa Gas, Step One Automotive Group, Talking Parents and Vertex Solutions.

The Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce has had the incredible privilege to have participated in both the 1957 and 1968 Doolittle Raider reunions, held here in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, and planned the 2008 Raider Homecoming re-enactment ceremony as well as hosted the 2013 Farewell Tribute —The Raiders 71st and Final Reunion.

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The Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce is a community development organization that advocates for businesses across Okaloosa County, creating greater opportunities for all.

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