

Generator Replacement - Flight suit Upgrade

Clear in the backup mirror, clear in the rearview mirrors, I look all directions numerous times as if every detail could not be overstated. Eldest child, I am the responsible one, driving to the hospital monitoring all possible hazards. See that young driver weaving in and out of lanes, or that one, cell phone attached to the ear and the frazzled parent with kids fighting in the back seat. So many distractions, so many priorities.

I glance in the rearview mirror again, my father sits with a pensive look out the window. Last hospitalization he experienced so much pain, he used the antidote for torture tactics he was taught in the Naval Academy some seventy years ago. Was he feeling the call to battle again, there to lie stretched out as friendly fire needle for blood, infuse veins with potions of shadow dreams, then incise the chest to replace the generator that paces his heart, the ninety-two ear old muscle beat to exhaustion.

At the front door, forty-five minutes early, I assist my Dad to a standing position. The nurse in me reminds him there are wheelchairs, so he might conserve his energy, make the journey easier. Dad smiles, he will not need one.

My mother at his side, they assure me they will find the way as I park the car. Dad's chest wheezing like a squeeze box, the leather worn to threads, each breath a labored bellows to the rhythm of his shuffling feet - my father - World War II Naval pilot - walks with pride. Shows no signs of trepidation. Going in he knows the consequences. The course is plotted and he is determined, once again, to bring the flight suit safely home.