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Period 3

Lloyd E. Leary
U.S. Army
Mar. 1943-Dec.1945

Lloyd E. Leary

Lloyd Leary was a veteran from the European Theater of World War Two (WWII). He was drafted into the United States Army in 1943, at the age of 19. He would undergo basic training at Camp Wheeler, as well as some time training in Florida and California before being sent into combat in June 1944. Going into the service he knew that things were going to be different from that point on. By the time he was actually in battle he was very nervous as any person would be. He was given the job of being a scout someone who goes out in front of the squadron to make sure it is clear which frightened him greatly because he felt as if death was almost certain. He would go on to serve four campaigns in Europe becoming a decorated Staff Sergeant, along the way saving the lives of many of his squad members and sharing his accounts with many students on five occasions at King High Remembers.

Lloyd was born in Woodcock Township, Pennsylvania in 1923, but moved later to Jamestown. He grew up with six brothers and one sister, all of whom played a role in WWII and the Korean War. Growing up predominantly during the Great Depression, Lloyd didn't seem to notice the economic squalor as a child. He felt that everyone that he knew was poor, so he assumed that America was in it together.

Lloyd was not of age to be drafted when the war first started, so by the time he was, the US was making a push to defeat Germany, and the Allies had them on the ropes. Service called for his efforts first in Europe on June 8, 1944, when he was deployed into Normandy on the heels of D-Day. After heading out, his ship had experienced some boiler trouble and fell out of their convoy. Due to the noise of the repairs being made and the fact that there were many German submarines in the waters, many of the people aboard the ship were frightened of subs torpedoing them. The ship's boiler was repaired and they met back up with the convoy and their first obstacle was overcome. The unit arrived on Utah Beach on approximately July 10th. He became a part of the Army's 83rd Infantry Division. Along with his new friend Stoney, they fought as replacement soldiers. His first engagement with the division would take him to one of the largest battles the war would see and would later serve under the great General Patton in the 3rd Army.

It didn't take long once Leary was in France for the war to have an effect on him. Within the first few days, the squad was ambushed by a lone German in a field of grain. While the squad was walking through a field, the North-facing Nazi machine gunner was alerted by the squad's approach and began to fire. Some were hit by the whizzing bullets as the rest of the group dropped to the ground to take cover in the grain. Once he felt he had an opportunity to take up a defensive position, he got on one knee and fired at the gunner, striking him in the head. He fired his shot and with that bullet saved many people's' lives, but at the same time took his first life. He knew that what he did was necessary to protect himself and his squad mates, but was obviously a taxing experience for the first few days of his tour. When the German had been checked out by a medic one had been shot through his mouth and it came out his neck without hitting his spine and because the bullet was hot the wound cauterized itself.

Soon after that is when he had his most memorable event through all of his war experiences. It became a story he found himself telling on many occasions over the years. The squad began pushing the Germans back through the city of Grevenmacher. Eventually the squad captured a major objective, a large winery that overlooked the city. While the functionality of the facility as tactical a outpost was good, the same couldn't be said about the building's plumbing, due to the fact that the winery's toilets were unable to flush because the building's plumbing wasn't functioning, and that was a necessity as much as anything. In fact, the need became so requisite that the squad began using the building's extensive supply of fermenting champagne in the back to flush the toilets out. Even with this predicament the town was kept very quiet and there was very little gunfire from either side.

Tragedy struck as the squad was on its way to the Battle of the Bulge. The morning when they were headed out Lloyd was walking and a mortar landed behind him and caused serious harm. He was sent to the nearest hospital for treatment but was sent all the way back to Britain for a fear that the hospital he was in was going to be overrun. While in the hospital he met someone from his basic training camp who was also injured. He made a full recovery and was back out in the field a short while later. He received a Purple Heart later for this. The next altering action he took also saved the lives of his fellow soldiers. Pinned down again by enemy fire, Lloyd kicked in a door and shot two Germans in order to protect his squad. He would later be awarded a Silver Star for valor.

The war ended shortly after for Leary when Germany surrendered. When he returned home Lloyd went to college at Penn State and got a Masters Degree in Education. While attending Penn State he played basketball and baseball. On top of that he also pursued a dream

and tried out for a baseball team and he made it on the minor league White Sox team, the Oil City Oilers. He never ended up playing for the White Sox but even making it is still impressive. He ended up coaching multiple sports throughout his life. Unfortunately, Lloyd passed onto the final roll call on April 10th, 2015 when he passed away from a heart attack. Although we only spent a few hours with Lloyd, it was clear to us he was a great man and loved by many. It was an honor to have had the chance to interview him and write the story of his life. Lloyd set an example of what it means to be a true American hero. He served with honor and distinction, and served beyond the call of duty.