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Period 5

Leo Marty Schlocker

Army

25 Years of Service

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### Leo Marty Schlocker

America is the land of the brave and the home of the free, but this all comes at a certain price. A price that is paid by the thousands of men and women who risk their lives fighting for our country. War holds many invaluable stories that go untold of many heroes and their brave actions. Heroes such as Leo Marty Schlocker.

Schlocker was born on April 5, 1925 into a Russian immigrant family in Los Angeles. As a child, he was not outgoing nor a leader yet still managed to get in trouble from time to time. While attending high school at Fremont High, he learned that he absolutely hated school and actually left to live with his brother in Nevada until he was drafted. He had other passions he wanted to accomplish, such as joining the armed forces like his father had. Schlocker's father had fought in the Spanish-American War as well as World War I and was a major influence on Schlocker's future choices. Schlocker tried very hard to get into the Navy so he could pursue his dreams of navigating a submarine throughout war raged waters. However to his dismay, they

would not let him in due to him being colorblind. After many failed attempts, he was finally drafted into the Army in 1943 at age 18.

Schlocker moved around from Salt Lake City, Utah to Georgia to complete his training of becoming a combat jumper in the 17th airborne. In his training, he suffered many problems with his legs and his back because of the heavy equipment he had to carry while jumping. After completing five successful test training jumps, Schlocker was ready to be deployed into action. He spent a lot of time in London, where he had lots of fun in Hyde Park and Piccadilly Circus with his best friend Red Emmick whom he did everything with. In the Army, *they gave you two things: cigarettes and condoms*. For fun, Schlocker and his buddies would go to the theater and blow up the condoms and let them loose to fly overhead all over the place. While in England, his troop was called into action. They sat in an airport night and day for three days straight waiting for the call that would send them into battle. Instead of the call they were waiting for, they received a miracle call that deemed the previous battle a successful operation so their order of deployment was cancelled. After spending some time in France, Schlocker and his airborne unit were moved to their next, battleground; Germany.

The first time Schlocker landed from a plane was on December 24, 1944. That night he enjoyed a nice Christmas feast, but that next morning on Christmas Day, he went into action. He fought for only a couple of weeks before he became wounded. Schlocker, his best friend Emmick, and his Sergeant were in a Belgian house. The same day which fell upon January 7, 1945 he and his buddies looked outside to see the tiny house surrounded by German soldiers accompanied by many Tiger Tanks. The three of them went into hiding at the bottom of a staircase and hoped to stay safe. However, a German soldier entered the house and found the

three of them. A German soldier yelled in German, “How many are down there?!” Schlocker looked up and made eye contact with him where he saw that in one hand he held up a grenade ready to be dropped onto the trio. He held up three fingers and they were forced out of hiding and captured. They were put in an inoperable jeep that was tied to a tank where they were pulled through snow to be put in multiple prison camps for the next five months.

The first day they were captured, they were interviewed and eventually relocated to a German hospital to help hold down German soldiers during major operations. One of their jobs were to stack the bodies of those who did not survive and Schlocker could not find a single connection with any of them. *They didn't mean a damn thing to me, they were just bodies.* While at the hospital, his best friend Emmick decided to donate a pint of his blood for a German officer. He was rewarded with a delicatessen of various sausages and cheese and chose Schlocker to help him eat it. They both ate until they grew very sick, which did not take much considering the fact they were starved the entire time as a prisoner. After some time spent at the hospital, Schlocker was again transported to another prison camp. He spent a week in a box car traveling to his new prison camp. The boxcar was too crowded to even sit down in so the people on board agreed to take turns sitting down. The cars were made to fit eight horses and cows. One hundred men were crammed into a single car. In the box cars, which were the same ones the Jews were put in. They were strafed from P-47th US Air Force. Once out of the cars, Schlocker and his friends took their blankets and spelled out P.O.W. to try to signal to the American P47's flying above. One pilot saw this sign and flew down to wave at the group before flying off again. This helped to raise the spirits of the prisoners considerably. In these camps, the prisoners were constantly fighting off dysentery and endured life with no dental care, no toilet paper, and lots of lice. Lice grew in

abundance. Every once in awhile, the clothes were taken off and thrown into a steamer where the lice eggs hatched only making matters worse. One camp Schlocker stayed at was in Bonn, Germany. There was never a “normal” day because bombs were constantly dropped; the British dropped bombs at night and the US Air Force dropped bombs during the day. While in this camp, a group of British bombers missed the city of Bonn, Germany and bombed the camp destroying it and causing him to be moved once again.

Schlocker was moved to the Bad Orb P.O.W. Stalag 9B camp where he spent the rest of the war. One day, tanks rolled in saving the prisoners and killed their lice problems. He was given fresh clothes and taken to LaHore, France where he was hospitalized until healthy again. After spending two weeks in the hospital, Schlocker was finally sent back to America. He had the best day of his life seeing the Statue of Liberty again after many years, on Mother’s Day 1945!

Schlocker received many awards for his bravery including two purple hearts, a bronze star, and other medals. He returned to school to complete high school. He then attended the University of Southern California part time where he studied Law and Public Administration while he joined the Los Angeles Police Department where he spent 25 years as a police officer. During his time as a police officer, he was diagnosed with having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Nowadays, Schlocker spends his time volunteering at the Veterans Hospital, Loma Linda, California, where he represents all P.O.W.’s of Southern California. He attends many various meetings where he helps out in any way possible. The accomplishments he is most proud of is raising a family, being in the military, and helping numerous people.