

Gabriela Plascencia

Brittany Borrego

Corona

U.S History Per 4

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Ray Miranda

The 1940s was a time period where it was filled with global losses and national turmoil. World War II had occurred during this time period and it impacted the lives of many people. Some witnessed the horrific acts of Hitler and the Holocaust or the bombing of Pearl Harbor. People got to witness many different horrid conflicts no matter what continent they were in. The people who had the greatest impact on the war were the soldiers who had served for their countries and one of those people was Ray Miranda.

Ray Miranda was born September 24, 1924. He grew up in San Bernardino and attended San Bernardino High School. He came from a military family, his father had served in WW1. While other men were at war, he took over some of their jobs like picking oranges and prunes. He also had a job at the San Bernardino Air Depot where he learned how to do mechanic work. He had decided to go to the military after he finished high school.

After graduation, he went straight into the U.S. Army, he was nineteen years old at the time. He was sent to Camp Callan, a training camp where he had done sixteen weeks of training. After his sixteen weeks of training, they sent him to Fort Bliss which was located in Texas and went straight to advanced training in aircraft weapons. He completed his advanced training and was sent to Fort George Meade, Maryland. It took a three day train ride that went to Nebraska,

crossed over Canada to New York, across Pennsylvania. He got to the harbor in Boston, Massachusetts and left port on USS Wakefield on June 6th of 1944 and he arrived at Liverpool, England on the 12th of June. He remembered hearing on the radio that D-Day had started.

He went to a camp in England that had no beds so he and the other men had to sleep on the ground. He remembered vividly how their commander made them cut each others hair with pocket knives. He was at the camp for two and a half weeks before they had called his number to take him to the unit he was going to join. His unit was called “Battalion B of the 361st Automatic Aircraft Weapons”, he studied aircrafts and was very good at identifying aircrafts. An officer had approached him and the officer pulled out flashcards and tested Ray on the aircrafts and he did very well and was placed on the field to identify any aircrafts. Ray and three other men were “Anti-Aircraft Soldiers” and they would be on the lookout for any incoming planes and they would be able to identify what kind of aircraft it was. While Ray was on the field in France as an “Anti-Aircraft Soldier” , he had learned how to speak french and write in french by reading newspapers, and calendars.

The war had ended on May 8, 1945. Ray had gone to Germany to guard German prisoners at the Palace of Justice which was a prison with three levels. One of his jobs was to take the prisoners to exercise. He said many high ranking Germans were taken to the Palace of Justice, like Hitler's foreign minister, Ulrich Ribbentrop and Ruldolf Hess,who was an appointed “Deputy Führer” to Hitler, which meant that he was head of the Nazi party. There was only eighty-nine men and all of them were on guard. The Nuremberg Trials took place at the Palace of Justice. Ray had been informed about Nazis committing suicide by hanging themselves in their cells while the trials were going on. Ray was not aware of how much damage the Nazis did until

the fourth day he was in the prison. This officer pulled everyone who was working at the prison into a room that had a film in it. The film had videos of Nazis doing all the terrible things they were doing throughout the war, Ray stated that “ After watching that video, I no longer had any pity for the men in there.” Three months later, it all finally ended and he came home.

Ray came home with three battle stars, Ribbon of Gold Conduct and Eto. After he came home, he returned to work at the San Bernardino Air Depot. He had left that job for one at the Sante Fe Railroad. During that time, he met a girl named Kay Arichbeque, and they ended up getting married in 1950, Ray told us they took their honeymoon in San Francisco. He became an instructor for combat engineers during the Korean War. After the war he continued his career as a machinist until he retired. Ray proudly told us “ I was glad to serve my country, I would do it again to protect my country.”