

Memorial Day 2010

“The Greatest Generation” that’s how the men and women of the World War II era were referred to. To this day it is said they saved the world from tyranny. Today they who numbered near 10 million from the beginning of World War II for the United States in 1940 to 1946 *add* are passing at rate of 800 per day.

They above all other Veterans’ of our time deserve praise because we are running out of time to thank them. Our VFW numbers of World War II Veteran’s get smaller every year, and yet we still have those that are few, with us here today. I would like to take a moment to tell you about our comrades that still compliment our ranks.

Some served in the South Pacific and some served in the European Theater of war. All served in various types of jobs during their military service. Some saw combat some did not, but “all have served.”

It is said for every man in the field it takes another 10 to support them. So all had purpose, but all never felt they had done enough compared

to the price paid by their fallen comrades.

Among us today is Cpl. Ron McQueen of the 5th Marine Division 26th Marine Reg. He entered the Corp in 1943. By then the island battles in the Pacific been in full force. Ron was being prepared for the landing on Iwo Jama. An island of two major air strips, a stepping stone to the back door of Japan. The Navy and the Marine Corp at this point had lost thousands of men on islands such as Guadalcanal, Tarwa, and Palau, not to mention the battle of Midway.

Ron's unit hit the beach as the second wave which gave them a 25% rate of survival then the first wave that preceded them. After many close calls, his luck ran out after 2 and ½ weeks on the hot volcanic sands of Iwo Jima. Ron was severely wounded by artillery shrapnel. At which point he was evacuated to a hospital ship and shipped back to Hawaii. After his recovery he was discharged from the Marine Corp. Ron received Purple Heart, puc with battle star, Asiatic Pacific Metal, and Victory Metal.

He is a legacy of the flag raising on Iwo Jima which is one of the most

recognized monuments and photo of World War II.

Not far away from Ron was another Marine doing a different job. Cpl. Salvator Franzese entered the Marine in 1942 and served until 1945. He was with the First Marine Air Wing aboard various aircraft carriers as well as on many islands in the Gilbert and Solomon Chain, such as Siapan and Boganville. He served with the 133rd SBD Dive Bomber Squadron ^{And Survive} as what was called a seat gunner. His assignment was to man Twin 50 caliber machine guns at the rear of a Douglas Dive Bomber Aircraft. He fired upon many on coming Japanese aircraft, while he was on dive bombing missions against Japanese ships. He had many close calls, but the worse point of attacks was the vertical dives the bomber had to make to drop its bomb while receiving direct fire from their advisory. If you were hit during the dive there was pulling out. The angels were with him on many occasions. For his service he received Presidential Unit Citation with Battle Star, Asiatic Pacific Campaign, Victory and Victory Metal.

Also in the pacific at this time was Petty Officer Second Class John Havenga. Served in the United States Navy from 1942 to 1946. John's

ship was the USS Orvetta, serving in the waters off the coast of the Philippines. John's ship was purposefully dodging the enemy for the purpose of retrieving sailors from US Ships that have been sunk during sea battles and airmen knocked down during dog fights or anti aircraft of enemy ships. For his service John received Asiatic Pacific Metal, Victory Metal, and Philippine Liberation Metal.

On land at this time in the Philippine Islands, was Sgt. Ted Dabraowski, United States Army. Ted served from 1945 to 1947 under the direct command of General McArthur, who after the historical march from Bataan, were thousands of American and British Troops were captured by Japanese forces during the beginning of the war. General McArthur vowed to return to liberate the Philippine Islands. "I shall return." Was the legacy he lived. Ted was in charge of logistically placing prisoners of war in various locations throughout the islands, as well as transferring US Troops throughout various theaters of operations in the Philippine Islands. Ted received the PUC, Asiatic Pacific, Good Conduct, and Infantry Badge for his service.

On the other side of the globe in the European Theater of War is Srgt.

Julius Borghese of the US Army's 9th Infantry Division. Julius entered the army of the ripe age of 17 in 1940 and did not return home until 1946. Julius' exploits were many. In his first theater of action was the battle of North Africa in the liberation of Morocco and Algeria, fighting against the seasoned army of General Erwin Romels' German Panzers. One day Julius explained there was a lull in battle against the German Army. A jeep with a high ranking officer came up behind me and to my surprise it was General George Patton. General Patton questioned why one of our Sherman Tanks was being protected by our Infantry units and why the tank was not protecting the infantry. Julius replied diplomatically, "I don't know Sir. It's not my outfit!" After the battle for Tunisia, it was on to Sicily. Which at this point Julius was hoping to get leave and go home after two major campaigns. Not the case! General Patton wanted this war over and was determined not to stop until he was in Berlin. But a short time after, Julius did get the chance to go to England, where is was to prepare along with his unit for the D-Day landing at Normandy. After landing on Normandy France June 6th, 1944, Julius made it off the beach only winding up to getting wounded by a German Bomber attack. This time he was lucky. His wounds were only superficial he was patched up and sent back to his unit within hours.

He made it as far as to September of that year at which point he was ordered to do a recon of a French Farm House, which he and ^{his} patrol came to find was occupied by German Forces. A fierce fire fight broke out and Julius was hit in the arm. This time his wound was not superficial, and the war was over for Sgt. Julius Borghese. He was at that point sent back to the States and was fortunate to have an expert surgeon who saved him from losing his arm. For his service Julius received the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, Victory Metal, European Campaign Metal, a Unit Commendation, and the Combat Infantry Badge.

Now the tide of war has turned into its conclusion. Sgt. John Ross 8th army under General McArthur served 1945-1947. John's service was as Occupation Forces in Japan after their surrender in 1945. John served in the transportation Corp while in Japan. He had witnessed a lot of the devastation created in the aftermath of war to the civilian population of Japan. From the first raid by Jimmy Doolittle's bombers in retaliation to the attack on Pearl Harbor to the final days the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war with Japan. John

does not like talk about what he had seen, but in some form all veterans bear the ghosts of war. John received The Asiatic Pacific Metal, World War II Victory Metal, and Occupation Metal.

Ted Tokarz First Class Pharmacist Mate and Navy Corp Man served from 1943-1945. Ted trained as Navy Corp Man at Camp Pedelton California and for a time was assigned to the US Marines. Ted awaited orders for deployment under Northern Pacific Command but was assigned instead of the Pacific Theater to a ship that tendered damaged ships returning from battles in the Pacific. He was also assigned to US Naval hospital, Balboa in San Diego, for the care of wounded sailors and marines. For his service Ted received the Victory Metal and the Asiatic Pacific Metal.

INTRO. ANY WWII VETS IN THE CROWD. ALL PLEASE STAND.

There is much more to be said by some of these men, more than we have time for here and now. They may have lost their youth, but their spirit and vigor of that time lives with them, and the Veteran's of today. They are here, I suggest you speak with them while you can.

Thank you

Brad Orenstein

Rank: PFC - Private First Class

Active Member of the Bloomingdale V.F.W. Post 7539

United States Army Aug. 1989 - Nov. 1991

Stationed with Delta 54th Engineer Division, Wealfleckin, Germany

Supported the 3rd Armored Division during the 1991 Gulf War

This is a second hand account of a friendly fire incident that unfortunately took the life of a fellow comrade stationed with Charlie Company 54th Engineer Battalion on February 27, 1991.

On the days leading up to the ground war termed "Desert Storm," our goal as a mechanized unit was to keep moving forward towards the border between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. We were told that if your vehicle was disabled that you should gather together with other downed vehicles and wait for help.

In the early morning hours of February 27, 1991 along a supply route far from the front line, several members of Charlie 54th Engineer Battalion, as well as, other soldiers from various companies were gathered together to form a group of disabled vehicles. On that morning, elements of the 3rd ACR crossed a U.S. Army Corp boundary line into a sector known to be controlled by the 1st Armored Division. It was later concluded that their operation plans and orders were incomplete and confusing due in part to inadequate intelligence. In the confusion, the commander of a Bradley fighting tank crossed this boundary which was known to contain friendly forces. It was also determined that the commander did not abide by the stated rules of engagement - not to fire below the established boundary unless fired upon. After crossing this boundary line, the 3rd ACR identified what they thought were enemy troops and vehicles gathered together. With no warning shots, they began to fire upon the group killing one soldier, Corporal Douglas Fiedler, and wounding a second, Sergeant James Napier. During the attack, several members of Charlie 54th Engineer Battalion attempted to identify themselves as American to the Commander of the Bradley tank with no luck.

Further investigations of inconsistent claims that the engineers returned fire turned out to be false, and furthermore, the target was unconfirmed and should have never been fired upon. It was estimated that the time between the first shots and ultimately the fatal shots was 7 minutes and 25 seconds.

Of the 148 soldiers that lost their life during the war, 35 of them were due to friendly fire.

Thank you.

Memorial Day Remembrance

May, 2010

Name and Rank: Charles Groner, Sgt.

Branch of Military: U.S.A.F.

My Story

It was about 2 a.m. in the morning at Clark Air Force Base, 1969 in the Philippines, and I was climbing into a transit truck with parts from supply. The truck driver said we had to stop on the jet ramp as there was a high priority on the tarmac and we were to assist.

As my new recruit, Joe and I stepped out of the truck I saw that a Colonel was pacing back and forth in front of the aircraft and by his body language I knew he wanted his airplane fixed now, and now wouldn't be soon enough.

I looked at the Tech Sergeant in charge and asked him who was on the plane because they had every specialist from the maintenance shop out working on this plane. He told me to look into the crew door, so we went over and looked in. What we saw was a young soldier who had no arms or legs, and had half of his face bandaged up. The nurse didn't say anything, but by the look on her face, I knew it was bad.

I went back to the Tech Sergeant and asked him what the story was about this soldier. He told me that this young soldier knew he was dying and wanted to die on American soil before his birthday.

Somehow the Colonel heard about it, got the soldier and a nurse on his airplane and made it his mission to make it happen. Two hours into the flight there was an engine problem, so he landed at Clark for maintenance

A few minutes later I saw the Tech Sergeant make a motion with his hand that they were ready to start the engine. The Colonel got back into the aircraft with the Tech Sergeant. They test ran the motor and brought it back to idle. The Tech Sergeant jumped out of the aircraft and motioned to pull the chocks, ground power unit and pins.

He then picked up the yellow wands and began to taxi the aircraft on to the taxi way. As soon as the plane was ready to go he dropped the wands, came to attention, and gave a sharp salute to the Colonel, who returned the salute with a thumbs up as a thank you.

As I returned to the plane I was working on, I saw the jet take off into the darkness and the red rotating beacon on the tail just faded away.

I often wondered if he made it home because we had strict orders not to ask or talk about what happened to the aircraft after it left the field.

In my heart I know he made it home.

Brussels, Belgium Monday May 14, 1945

Dearest Darling,

Oh, honey how happy I am, I can hardly believe that I'm alive and free again. My stay in Germany was a terrible one and it made me very nervous. I never did have hardly any fingernails, but now they are worse. I'm sorry, but I hope you don't get sore over this, but I couldn't help it, sweating out bombs ain't no picnic. We had so many air raids that it wasn't even funny. At night you couldn't go to sleep, but Gerry didn't care. We still had to go to work. I swore at them many a time, the way they treated us!

We were freed by the Russians on May 2nd and they treated us good. We could have anything we wanted and we did. We stayed with them for 10 days and then we marched for 75 kilometers to the British lines and it was swell to speak to a Canadian. We went into Camp and were treated swell. We were treated to a good meal and a Dick Powell, Linda Darnell movie "It Happened Tomorrow."

We then left Wismar and moved by truck and busses for 75 miles to a place called Luneburg and then flew by air to Brussels. Over here Canadian troops are taking care of all ex-prisoners of war and we are getting more good treatment.

Until we see each other, good bye, good luck and God Bless.

Pvt Joseph Kurek

81st AA Battalion

101st Airborne Division