



Wheeler Talk, Leonard "Bud" Lomell, Local World War II Hero

Transcript:

00;00;04;07 - 00;01;25;05

Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Are you a student in 8th through 12th grade? Are you looking for a dress for your junior or senior prom? Or perhaps a spring formal or 8th grade dance? Then keep these dates in mind. This March and April, the Ocean County Library is returning with the 17th annual Prom Dress Giveaway. The Prom Dress Giveaway allows you to take home the dress of your dreams for free. Simply come to one of our participating branches, find a dress, and take it home. The giveaways will be from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Toms River Branch on Monday, March 17th, Tuesday, March 18th and Wednesday, March 19th. The Little Egg Harbor Branch on Tuesday, March 25th and Wednesday, March 26th. And finally the Jackson Branch on Tuesday, April 1st and Wednesday, April 2nd. For more details, check out our website at theoceancountylibrary.org, visit your local branch, or call us at 732-349-6200. We look forward to seeing you then.

00;01;25;08 - 00;02;23;07

Allison

[ALLISON] Welcome back to Wheeler Talk: the History of Ocean County. I'm your host, Allison. I'm the local history librarian, and I work out of the Hugh B. Wheeler Room, located on the second floor of the Ocean County Library's headquarters branch in Toms River. Wheeler is a treasure trove of genealogy and local history resources and home to many cherished one-of-a-kind artifacts. Wheeler is a great place to sit and read or conduct research. To help with your research, Wheeler has rare books, historic pamphlets and magazines, old city directories and phone books, yearbooks from Ocean County schools, maps and atlases, and much, much more. Are you interested in genealogy? Why not register for my ongoing class called Getting Started with Ancestry? Are you interested in local history? Well, you're in the right place. Each episode of Wheeler Talk will focus on a historic event in Ocean County, as well as highlight some relevant artifacts in your own collection.

00;02;23;09 - 00;06;36;17

Allison

[ALLISON] Now onto today's episode. In honor of World War II hero Len Lomell, known locally as Bud Lomell. This is a special three-part podcast. You're currently listening to part one, released on January

22nd in honor of Bud Lomell's birthday. Look out for part two coming in February, as well as a special part three you won't want to miss. Leonard G. Lomell, known to Ocean County residents as Bud Lomell, was born on January 22nd, 1920, in Brooklyn, New York. His parents, George and Pauline, both immigrants, moved Bud and his siblings to Point Pleasant, New Jersey. Just a few years after his birth. Bud graduated from Point Pleasant Beach High School in 1937 and went on to graduate from Tennessee Wesleyan College in 1941. During the summers, while pursuing his education, he worked for the US Post Office, a drudge company, the Pennsylvania Railroad, and he also worked in construction. Bud Lomell entered the military on June 13th, 1942, first serving with the 76th Infantry Division, rising in rank to platoon sergeant of a regimental intelligence and reconnaissance platoon. When the second Ranger Battalion was activated, he volunteered, becoming first sergeant in April of 1943 and later a battalion sergeant major. For his actions at Pointe du Hoc on D-Day, June 6th, 1944, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. On October 7th, 1944, he received a battlefield commission as a second lieutenant. He was awarded a Silver Star for his actions at Hill 400 in the Hurtgen Forest on December 7th, 1944. Some other medals he received for gallantry in action and meritorious service include the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart with two clusters, the British Military Medal, the Croix de Guerre with silver lining, the Chevrolet of the French Legion of Honor, and the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal. He was later inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame, the Point Pleasant Beach High School Hall of Fame, and he was awarded honorary doctorates by Tennessee Wesleyan College, Monmouth University, and Ocean County College. Bud Lomell married Charlotte Ewert on June 6th, 1946, together Bud and Charlotte raised their three daughters Georgina, Pauline, and Renee, as well as Charlotte's sister Jean's children, Elizabeth and Jay Bergson after their mother passed away. For this podcast, I had the great honor and privilege of speaking with Bud Lomell's daughter, Renee Lomell, Ocean County resident and retired school teacher. And may I add, one of the most wonderful people I have had the privilege of meeting. My partner went to Toms River High School South while Ms. Lomell was a teacher there. He wasn't lucky enough, as he puts it, to have been in one of her classes, but he never forgot a compliment he received from Ms. Lomell for his part in a project he helped compose for one of his friends who was in her class. After meeting Renee myself, I finally understand why that one compliment has been so memorable for him. From all I've read and come to know about Len Lomell, Renee seems to be a much like her dad. Renee is highly intelligent, intentional with her words and actions, reflective, and thoughtful. As I sat across from her during this interview, I found meaning in every word she chose, every memory she shared. I feel strongly that most people don't live their lives with as much purpose as Renee. A trait I can only assume she inherited from her dad. Renee, thank you again for the opportunity to meet you and interview you for this podcast. Now let's get started.

00;06;36;19 - 00;07;41;03

Allison

[ALLISON] In the book titled Len Lomell: D-Day Hero, author Steven M. Gillon writes that Len Lomell had been trying to get into a military academy when he was first drafted into the Army in 1942. From there, things happened rather quickly. Lomell was swiftly shipped off to Fort Meade in Maryland, where he joined the 76th Infantry. This wasn't his original ambition, but to say he rose to the occasion would be putting it mildly. He was so determined and hard working that he soon rose to the rank of platoon sergeant in the reconnaissance division of the 417th Infantry Regiment. Less than a year later, in April of 1943. Lomell became first sergeant of the famous dance company of the second Ranger Battalion. Renee, your dad once stated in an interview that his motivation to rise in the ranks was to make enough

money to take care of his parents back home. I assumed there were other enlisted men with the same responsibilities in mind, but there seems to have been a certain drive your dad had that is rarely seen in others. What do you think drove your dad's resilient spirit?

00;07;41;05 - 00;08;19;27

Renee

[RENEE] I think the Great Depression was the prime motivator for my parents' generation when it came to economic issues. Dad's first job was when he was nine years old. Sending money home to care for his folks during the war was of primary importance to him. Dad's optimistic temperament and problems solving focus on the task at hand certainly are key elements in his resilient spirit. I also think he learned resilience from his family. His parents were hardworking immigrants who raised their children with love and taught them to persevere in life's challenges and heartaches.

00;08;19;29 - 00;10;53;13

Allison

[ALLISON] I want to impress upon our listeners how astounding Len Lomell's accomplishment was of rising to the rank of First Sergeant of Dog Company, Second Ranger Battalion. To even just become a Ranger, the training was brutal and most didn't make it. Rangers endured grueling trainings such as forced marches, sometimes without the ability to drink water, in an effort to prepare them for battlefield conditions. I read about one such march wherein one of Lomell's fellow rangers was so desperate for water that he jumped headfirst into a shallow river and sadly died. In addition to these marches, there were obstacle courses, speed marches, weapons training, hand-to-hand combat training, boat operations, training, and of course, cliff climbing. These cliff climbing drills were meant to again prepare rangers for battlefield conditions, so they were required to scale high surfaces with nothing more than their bare hands. If they quit, they weren't Ranger material. If they fell, they died. Those who passed the training and became Rangers were grateful for all they learned come D-Day, when they had to lean on their expertise in order to scale the impressive Pointe du Hoc. On June 6th, 1944, the Rangers were tasked with climbing Point du Hoc, a 100-foot cliff face in Normandy, France. The Rangers arrived at the point via a boat. Upon stepping off this boat, Lomell had fallen into an eight-foot crater filled with 42 degree water. Weighed down by his clothing and gear, he easily sink to the bottom. Even though Rangers were trained to put the mission first, that they themselves were expendable, Lomell's men took the time to pull him out and to safety. Not only were Lomell's clothing and gear now much heavier from being water logged, but he was then shot just above his hip upon reaching the beach, a wound which he didn't even notice at first. Neither the near-death experience after falling into the crater nor the gunshot wound were enough to slow him down, it seems, as he then proceeded to climb the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. Grappling hooks were shot from landing craft to the cliffs to secure ropes, which the men then used to climb. With nothing more than these ropes and extension ladders, the expertly trained rangers persevered through enemy fire raining down from above, as well as waterlogged ropes and incoming potato mashers. Renee, I believe this gunshot wound was your dad's first war-related injury. Did he ever talk about that incident? Also, did he ever share his feelings surrounding what seems to have been a near-death experience when he fell into that crater?

00;10;53;15 - 00;11;29;22

Renee

[RENEE] Well, dad was the first one off the landing craft and could have drowned, as so many did on D-Day. Having grown up in Point Pleasant on the Jersey Shore, I expect his body reacted from the past experiences being tumbled by the ocean waves. Fortunately, the men were able to pull them out quickly. I do not recall dad speaking about his feelings about the crater. He did speak of the gunshot wound. It was a lucky wound because it didn't hit any vital organs or bones. He applied the sulfur from the first aid packet and carried on.

00;11;29;24 - 00;13;09;14

Allison

[ALLISON] Not only did Lomell scale Pointe du Hoc with waterlogged clothing and gear, not to mention the gunshot wound he'd sustained, but he went on to earn his hero status by successfully completing the first part of his mission, which was to locate the infamous German guns and render them inoperable. These guns, which had a range of 10 to 15 miles, would have easily been capable of killing thousands of troops as they landed on the beaches of Normandy. Lomell, along with Sergeant Jack Kuhn, who Lomell had first met at Fort Meade and became fast friends with, went searching for these guns together. When Lomell located the guns, he made sure to cover him, keeping an eye on the gun crew down the field. Under the watchful eye of Kuhn, Lomell proceeded to use thermite grenades in the traversing mechanisms and elevation mechanisms of the German guns. Realizing they needed more ammo, Lomell and Kuhn then ran to get additional thermite grenades before returning to finish the job. Lomell, through the use of thermite grenades, as well as having smashed the gun sites, effectively rendered the guns inoperable and essentially useless to the Germans. Renee, it's safe to say, and historians agree, that your dad played a crucial role in the United States' success on D-Day. In fact, when visiting Normandy for the anniversary of D-Day in June of 1984, then-President Ronald Reagan said, "The men who took the cliffs, these are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war." If not for your dad's bravery, the outcome of D-Day would likely have been different. Was the moment he discovered and rendered the German guns inoperable particularly memorable for your dad?

00;13;09;16 - 00;14;00;10

Renee

[RENEE] Well, dad would explain that the Ranger mission at Pointe du Hoc on D-Day was to destroy the big coastal guns to set up a roadblock between Utah and Omaha Beach, and to cut the German communications. To quote dad, it was pure luck that he and Jack Kuhn were at the right place at the right time, and they did their job. Dad remembered every detail. One of the things that Ron Lane pointed out in his 1979 book, Rudder's Rangers, was that the Rangers were trained to think on their feet, so to speak. When the guns weren't in the concrete emplacements, dad led his platoon to the road to set up the roadblock. Then he and Jack went looking for the guns while Harvey Cohen had cut the German communication wires. But all the Rangers had the task.

00;14;00;17 - 00;14;16;12

Allison

[ALLISON] It's so interesting that he refers to it as pure luck. Everything I've read just shows that he is so humble. So many people think he almost single handedly saved D-Day, but he just won't acknowledge that. Sheer luck.

00;14;16;14 - 00;14;19;29

Renee

[RENEE] Because they were able to get it done.

00;14;20;02 - 00;15;23;22

Allison

[ALLISON] After rendering the guns inoperable, your dad moved on to the Rangers' second mission of D-Day, which was to prevent the Germans from sending reinforcements to Omaha Beach by holding the blacktop road, essentially creating a roadblock meant to destroy communication lines used by the Germans. The Rangers were told they would be relieved by noon, but as we now know, that did not happen. And in fact, they were stranded there, holding the road for two more days. The men didn't have food or water, and they used their helmets to go to the bathroom, all while in fear for their lives. The training that taught them they were expendable no doubt lingered heavily in the air. Yet somehow, Lomell found the inspiration to not only refuse to leave his post, no matter how dire the situation became, no matter the cost to his own life. But he worked hard to encourage his men to stay strong as well. Renee, your dad seems to have had an effortless way of inspiring others, of encouraging them. Can you recall a time from when you were growing up, when your dad inspired and encouraged you?

00;15;23;24 - 00;15;25;16

Renee

[RENEE] Every day.

00;15;25;18 - 00;15;26;17

Allison

[ALLISON] I love that.

00;15;26;19 - 00;16;07;27

Renee

[RENEE] Dad and mom were great role models by their actions, words, and their love. Dad did not talk about his actions either in war or in civilian life to us children. He told us inspiring stories of other family members, rangers and friends. Through the years, and particularly when dad died, rangers, friends, strangers, and extended family members would share a moment that dad had helped them in very practical ways or pro bono, or mentored them in work, skills, or life decisions. These stories meant so much to the family.

00;16;08;00 - 00;17;08;11

Allison

[ALLISON] This is a rather silly question and feels kind of strange moving into now, but I do have to ask. The Rangers faced miserable conditions during their trip to the French coast to capture Pointe du Hoc, before even boarding the boats, which took them to the point, the men were sick with food poisoning, thought to have been from contaminated hot dogs. Add to that the men's nerves surrounding what they were about to do a meal of pancakes for breakfast and turbulent seas, it's no wonder why they became sick. So sick, in fact, that it said barf bags weren't strong enough, so they began using the side of the

boat. The boat, however, was taking on water. So your dad instructed the men to use their helmets to remove as much water as possible to prevent the boat from sinking water, which was now mixed with vomit. For those listening, remember that those same helmets had to be worn after all of this, so I have to ask - did your dad ever eat hot dogs again?

00;17;08;14 - 00;17;12;11

Renee

[RENEE] Whenever he could. He loved hot dogs.

00;17;12;13 - 00;19;32;18

Allison

[ALLISON] That's impressive. I'm not surprised. I feel like that might speak to his resilient nature almost as much as climbing the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. So, moving on from hot dogs, Pointe du Hoc was a long, painful success for Lomell and his men, but the fight was far from over. In fact, a much more arduous mission was on the horizon. As World War II raged on, the United States decided it was crucial to capture Hill 400 in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest, approximately one half-mile east of Bergstein, Germany. Hill 400 was a high point in the forest from where Germans would shell American troops. Capturing the hill would not only intercept the shelling, but it would provide an unmatched vantage point in terms of observation. Capturing the hill would also disrupt Hitler's planned counter-offensive. Regular Army troops had tried and failed to capture the hill. As a result, Companies D and F of Second Ranger Battalion were assigned the assault of Hill 400, while the other companies of Rudder's Rangers were to secure the town of Bergstein. To get to the hill, the Rangers had to cross wide open land. Lomell, brave beyond words, charged across the field of half-frozen mud as German snipers and machine guns fired at him. There were no foxholes. There was no shelter. All he and the other Rangers could do was run as fast as they could while shooting randomly. Lomell never hesitated. He never slowed down. He just kept charging, somehow dodging enemy fire. Once Lomell and his men reached the hill, they now had to climb it. Hill 400 is aptly named, 400 feet high, steep and slippery. Pointe du Hoc was nothing compared to this. But if we've learned anything about Len Lomell and the Rangers themselves, it's that they can do anything, and they did. An hour after the assault commenced, the Rangers had secured Hill 400. Lomell felt great pride in 65 Rangers accomplishing what thousands of Army troops couldn't. Renee, your dad was known to be an incredibly humble man, but it seems he had a special level of pride for the Rangers' ability to capture Hill 400. Did he ever talk more about his feelings surrounding what happened that day?

00;19;32;20 - 00;22;02;02

Renee

[RENEE] Dad had great pride in the Rangers of World War II, particularly D Company of the Second Ranger Battalion, the company that he was with from the founding of the battalion until he was shipped home. Growing up, visits from D Company Rangers and their families were always a big deal and lots of fun. They were all heroes to us. The stories we children heard were the funny things that happened in training or after combat, not the gory, heartbreaking stories. We knew the short story version of Pointe du Hoc. I didn't hear about Hill 400 until 1989. Dad was on the history committee for the Ranger Battalion Association Winstonsalem. Second Ranger Battalion Companies B and C decided to write a book covering what each company of the Second Ranger Battalion did in the Hurtgen Forest Offensive

from November 14th to December 10th, 1944. As a former Master Sergeant of the second Battalion, dad helped gather the material from Second Rangers. I think this process made him reflect on his experience. In the copy of the book the dad gave me, he wrote, quote, "December 7th, 1944 was the most horrendous and terrifying day I've ever lived through. I have been close to death many times, in and out of combat, and before and since that fateful day. But it was on December 7th, 1944, at Hill 400 that I expected death to strike me any second of every minute. Shrapnel and bullets seemed to rain down upon us unmercifully, almost continuously. Have you ever tried to avoid being hit by a raindrop?" End quote. I learn more about dad's actions in the article by William R. Phillips in the May 2002 edition of the World War II magazine, and in Cole Kingseed's book Old Glory Stories: Combat Leadership in World War II, published in 2006. In combat, there is no time to reflect on feelings. Cole quotes dad saying, "I never had time to be afraid. I was too preoccupied with the success of the mission and saving as many lives as I could."

00;22;02;05 - 00;22;50;05

Allison

[ALLISON] I would say that that's probably good advice for people in general. No time to be afraid, too preoccupied with living. Thank you for sharing that. After capturing the hill, the Rangers now had to hold it as artillery shells exploded. The trees and shrapnel fell all around them. Lomell, his index finger nearly sliced clean off by shrapnel, didn't hesitate as he moved through the danger with the goal of checking on his men. A fellow Ranger was later quoted as having said, I can still see Len walking on the top of that hill. His blood coming from his hand and carrying his Tommy gun. A leader like that, we would do anything for. Renee, I'm curious. Did your dad see himself as a leader?

00;22;50;08 - 00;23;14;11

Renee

[RENEE] That was his job. He had Hill 400. He was to lead the first platoon of B company. But in the course of the assault, his CO Capt. McBride, was wounded and evacuated. And then at noon, the F Company Otto Masney was captured, which left dad in charge of DNF companies. And he did his job.

00;23;14;14 - 00;24;16;01

Allison

[ALLISON] While holding the hill, Lomell found himself in a precarious situation. The Germans weren't yet aware, but Lomell knew that they had far outnumbered the Rangers with cunningness and quick thinking, Lomell managed to trick the Germans into believing they were the ones who were outnumbered. This worked so well that some German history books to this day state that Americans were able to capture the hill in part because the Rangers had outnumbered the Germans. While the ruse worked temporarily. Lomell knew time was running out until the Germans realized the truth. And when that happened, the Rangers would all be dead. With the lives of his men at stake, and with the dead and dying lying all around him from previous attempts to take the hill, Lomell, for the first time wanted to retreat. In a twist of events, Lomell's men provided him with encouragement. Renee, it seems your father cared as much for his men as they cared for him. Did he ever talk about that moment on the hill? About what exactly his men said that encouraged him?

00;24;16;03 - 00;24;28;25

Renee

[RENEE] I only know what I've read in the books. He gave them a choice, and they voted to hold the hill. That was from the Last Hill by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin, which was published in 2022.

00;24;28;27 - 00;25;11;10

Allison

[ALLISON] So he gave them a choice. He trusted them enough that his life was on the line, and he went with whatever they felt was right. That's amazing. By the time help arrived, the scene was grim. Many men laid injured or dying, covered in blood. Lomell himself had a deep gash in his upper thigh, numerous shrapnel wounds, and his finger was barely attached. Still, he refused to leave and seek medical treatment until all other wounded men were transported to safety. Renee, do you think your dad's sense of leadership was instilled in him through Ranger training? Or do you think this is a quality he already possessed even before he had been drafted?

00;25;11;12 - 00;25;41;24

Renee

[RENEE] Dad was very observant. He admired the leadership styles of his parents and his coaches. There were several COs of the second Ranger Battalion when it was first organizing that dad didn't think much of as leaders, but he greatly admired General Rudder's leadership style, which reflected Rudder's time as a high school football coach. Dad always talked about teamwork in families, in sports and the Rangers.

00;25;41;27 - 00;27;12;06

Allison

[ALLISON] Unfortunately, Hill 400 was recaptured soon after the Rangers left. The Rangers were the stars that day, not least of all Len Lommel. While the Rangers completed the daunting mission of capturing Hill 400 with great success, the military regretted the strategy of capturing the hill at all. In fact, the army was so ashamed of this plan that they didn't even want to acknowledge it for years after, which is why it took until 2007 for Lomell to receive his Silver Star, which was presented at a ceremony in Toms River. Lomell's Silver Star citation reads, "Conspicuously leading from the front, Lomell directed the successful defense of the hilltop in the face of a nearly overwhelming German counterattack midday. During the German bombardment that preceded the attack, Lomell suffered a head concussion and shrapnel wound in his left arm, rendering it useless, refusing shelter and at risk of his life with blood oozing from his ears, nose, and mouth, firing his machine gun cradled in his bandaged left arm with his right hand, he continued to lead his men against another ruthless German assault through the entire afternoon." Truly a humble man, Lomell downplayed his own role, instead choosing to pay homage to his men as well as truck drivers, jeep drivers, messengers and the like. For Lomell, it was truly a team effort. Renee, did your dad ever share his feelings about the hill being recaptured after the Rangers left?

00;27;12;09 - 00;27;41;01

Renee

[RENEE] In his retirement, he read articles in books about the Hurricane Forest, learning of the poor strategic decisions that led to the tremendous loss of American lives before the Rangers were assigned to Hill 400. Steven Gillon, in his book Len Lommel: D-Day Hero, did an excellent overview of what

historians have said and the anger dad felt about those decisions when he learned about it through research.

00;27;41;04 - 00;28;05;12

Renee

[RENEE] I will never forget what dad said in his narrative of Hill 400. Quote, "Of the 65 D company men who started the assault of Hill 400, only 15 walked away." End quote. Dad never forgot the men who died.

00;28;05;15 - 00;29;25;19

Allison

[ALLISON] In the book titled Len Lomell: D-Day Hero, author Steven M. Gillon writes that Lomell was promoted to Second Lieutenant of D Company, something that is very rare and awarded only to enlisted soldiers who are promoted to the rank of Commissioned Officer for outstanding leadership on the field of battle. Lomell became the first enlisted Ranger of the second Battalion to receive a battlefield commission. His company history recorded this quote in response, quote, "There was not a man who did not feel proud to serve under him." End quote. Colonel Rudder had the honor of pinning the gold Lieutenant bars on Lomell. Perhaps the reason why men felt so proud to serve under Lomell was not only because of the ruthless courage he displayed in battle, but also because of how gentle and caring he was with his men off the field. There are stories of him getting down on his knees to rub his men's feet in an attempt to restore circulation after their feet were so cold that they struggled to even remove their boots. Like a true hero, nothing was below him. Renee, there seems to be a sincere dichotomy to your dad, a sort of mix between fierce determination and gentle grace. Would you agree with this assessment of him? And can you think of any examples from your experience growing up with him which show this?

00;29;25;22 - 00;30;26;25

Renee

[RENEE] What a beautiful description. Fierce determination and gentle grace. I don't see them as opposites. I see them as making a whole. Gentle grace reminds me of dad's father, a Swedish immigrant whose job was a house painter, but who was also a talented artist and musician, and a kind and loving man. Fierce determination makes me think of the Norwegian grandmother who died before I was born. That cleared the table to help mom. If he thought one of us might be chilly, he'd wrap us in a blanket. One of his sayings was "anticipate the need." And he did. Helping others in little and big ways was just who he was. His nickname in D company was Mother Lomell because he cared for them, took care of them during the war and after. Whenever a phone call came for Len, he took the call.

00;30;26;27 - 00;31;14;27

Allison

[ALLISON] Renee, I'd like to talk a bit more about Colonel James Earl Rudder, who took charge as commander of Dog Company in 1943. From all I've read, he and your dad seem to have had a lot of respect for one another. It seems they were very close. One of the warmest stories I read was when your dad received the Distinguished Service Cross, the United States Army's second highest medal. Founding Ranger William O. Darby had once declared that no Ranger should ever receive the Medal of

Honor, which is the highest ranking award no matter how heroic they acted in battle. The day your dad was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, it is said that Rudder shook his hand and said, "Len, this is your Medal of Honor." Renee, did your dad and Colonel Rudder keep in touch?

00;31;14;29 - 00;31;46;06

Renee

[RENEE] Yes, through the Ranger Battalion Association reunions. Rudder was dad's hero. He was a remarkable man. I highly recommend Thomas Hatfield's wonderful biography, Rudder: From Leader to Legend. He died in 1969, far too young, just 59 years old. Dad attended the funeral of his role model and mentor in Texas and stayed in touch with the family.

00;31;46;09 - 00;32;05;05

Allison

[ALLISON] I've read that your dad wasn't happy with what the citation for the Distinguished Service Cross described, not only for some factual errors, but more so because it made no mention of his men. This apparently bothered him so much that he scribbled corrections on the document itself. Is this true?

00;32;05;07 - 00;32;25;20

Renee

[RENEE] Dad made copies of the citation with corrections and gave it to us as adults. Steve Gillon, in his biography of dad, gave an excellent analysis of how such factual errors happen, but dad was particularly upset that the Second Ranger Battalion was not mentioned.

00;32;25;22 - 00;32;43;24

Allison

[ALLISON] Rightly so. I want to talk about Sergeant Jack Kuhn, the fellow ranger who your dad initially met at Fort Meade and became friends with alongside your dad, and helped locate the German guns at Pointe du Hoc, for which he earned the Silver Star. Did your dad and Jack Kuhn keep in touch?

00;32;43;26 - 00;33;07;03

Renee

[RENEE] Yes. By phone. In the early days, when they were busy with their young families and jobs as the chief of police in Altoona, Pennsylvania, he didn't get much time off. In later years, they were able to visit more, and they were inducted together into the Ranger Hall of Fame in 1994.

00;33;07;05 - 00;33;10;17

Allison

[ALLISON] Did your dad keep in touch with any other Rangers?

00;33;10;19 - 00;33;58;08

Renee

Yes. Many of the men in D Company were from New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, which is a short ride to the Jersey Shore. In 1949, Mike Vargas, Second Battalion, Company C, founded the Ranger Battalion Association and dad did the incorporation papers, and the Ranger Battalion Association had

reunions every two years. Dad was very active in the organization, and when he was president in 1967, he started regional chapters to work on the reunions, which brought the men from different battalions together. And at that time, he organized the first trip to the battlefields for Rangers and their families. And then continued to do that.

00;33;58;11 - 00;34;07;11

Allison

[ALLISON] Were these the reunions where your mom made Ranger stew, or were these the ones at your home? I have to ask.

00;34;07;13 - 00;34;36;09

Renee

[RENEE] Ranger stew was when people came to visit, which they did all the time. The reunions I'm talking about was for all six battalions, and it was done in different places throughout the country so that people could drive to it, etc. so it sort of spread it. And the trips, the first one was 1967, which I'll talk about later, but the other trips were every five years specifically to Normandy.

00;34;36;14 - 00;34;43;02

Allison

[ALLISON] Okay. Thank you.

00;34;43;04 - 00;35;08;22

Renee

[RENEE] On behalf of the Lomell family, I would like to thank the people of Toms River and Point Pleasant for their recognition of dad, both his World War II service and his community service. It meant the world to him.

00;35;08;24 - 00;35;26;28

Allison

[ALLISON] This marks the end of part one. Stay tuned for part two wherein Renee shares intimate memories of life growing up with her dad, Bud Lomell, as well as an inside look at Bud and Charlotte's one-of-a-kind love story. See you next time for part two of Leonard "Bud" Lomell, local World War II hero.