

War Era Story Project 2012

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Age: 87

As a 16 year old younger sister, I was very concerned when my older brother, Joe Lemming, enlisted in the Air Corp, as it was known at that time, in 1942. Joe was sent to Basic Training in Texas. After many months, Joe graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant. He was sent to London, England in the European arena, to serve as a navigator on the B24 Bombers.

Joe had quite a few narrow escapes in Germany and other areas. One in particular occurred when Joe was a crew member on a plane that was weighted down with luggage of military men and women who had been interned in Turkey. The plane was losing altitude and was going to crash. The crew was instructed to bail out. Joe's friend and fellow crew member, Manny, refused to bail out, telling Joe that he was going to go back to Brooklyn in one piece. Manny got very adamant with Joe and hit Joe in the jaw. At that point, the plane was only about 500 feet from the ground. Joe bailed out of the plane, and hit the ground so hard that he was knocked unconscious. When he regained consciousness he found that Manny unfortunately, would not make it home.

After completing 33 missions, Joe was sent to Fort Worth, Texas, and promoted to the rank of Major. He was offered a job at the Pentagon, but said that he wasn't going to fly a desk. He stayed in Fort Worth as a navigator on the B36 Bomber.

On a routine flight on September 15, 1949, the B36 that he was flying in took off at dusk. As the plane travelled down the runway, it would not become air borne. The Fort Worth Lake was at the end of the runway. (What a place for a runway!) Without enough lift, the nose of the airplane broke off and went into the lake. Eight men survived and seven were lost. My brother Joe lost his life in that crash, which was very devastating to my family.

Two weeks after the crash, four jet engines were installed on B36 Bombers by the Air Force to improve the lifting of the aircraft. The B36 is now obsolete, and one is on display at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. I was able to tour the plane and that was very enlightening.

Another of my brothers, Tom Lemming, enlisted in 1943 at the age of 17. He was taken into the Navy and became a Navy SEAL. As a SEAL, he was on Normandy Beach the day before D-Day, placing bombs. He and his fellow SEALs could not leave after they had placed their bombs and had to conceal themselves when the battle began. They witnessed the terrible battle (pretty scary) until they were able to make their escape and return to their home base. He did return safely and finished out the war in the Navy. When the war was over, he enlisted in the Air Force and retired after 20 years to work in civilian life.

Both of my brothers were stationed in England during the war, and amazingly met up on September 7, 1944. I have included a photo taken of the two of them that day.



Tom retired to Arizona and died in 2007.

My husband, Al Young, enlisted in the Navy and served on Guam. He was a member of the electricians who repaired and serviced the Navy ships that had been shot up in battle. After the war he returned to his home in Tarentum, Pennsylvania and tried to go to work with his father building houses. He soon realized that he couldn't work for his Dad and happened to talk to some Marianist Brothers who suggested that he use the GI Bill and enroll in the University of Dayton, in Dayton, Ohio. He travelled out to Dayton on the bus and enrolled in the Education program. He became friends with Dan O'Connell while at UD. Dan was dating Arlene Weber, who worked with me at Ohio Bell. Al and I were introduced by Dan and Arlene in 1950 and went out on a blind date. Al and I dated and fell in love. We were married February 3, 1951 and were married for 58 years until his death in 2009. I have included a picture of Al in his Navy uniform in 1944, and another on Guam.

