

# He fought the enemy under water

*EDITOR'S NOTE: In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, The Lawrence Township Memorial Committee, in cooperation with The Ledger, will feature a column each week during the anniversary year profiling a Lawrence resident.*

The "Silent Service" took only volunteers and the secret of their success was keeping their operations secret.

Submarines were the Navy's deadliest weapon in the Pacific during World War II, and the men that served on them were, and still are, a very special breed. After serving 14 months in combat with an underwater demolition team, Ray Mount became one of those men aboard the USS Razorback.

Raymond B. Mount was born in Lawrenceville on January 18, 1926. He attended Lawrenceville Elementary School and graduated from Trenton Catholic High School in 1943.

Immediately after graduation, at age 17, Ray enlisted in the U.S. Navy. On completion of recruit training, he volunteered for submarine duty and was assigned to the USSR-11, a World War I sub at Philadelphia. It was taken for a short shake-down cruise and then turned over to the British as part of the Lend-Lease program. He was then reassigned to the USS Kete, which was still under construction at Manitowoc, Wis. In the meantime, Ray received training in diver's school, and was sent to Brisbane, Australia, in December, 1943. He became part of Underwater

Demolition Team III aboard the USS Kailua. The team consisted of 12 men, and were the forerunners of present day Navy SEALs, but did not receive the extensive training of the present day SEALs.

On Christmas Day, 1943, Ray and his team sank two army barges at New Britain to serve as a breakwater for a third barge to be used as a floating dock to supply troops in the invasion of New Guinea. They then returned to Darwin, Australia to demolish docks and pilings to make room for a landing craft repair center. In June, 1944, the team boarded a Navy sub-chaser for the invasion of Guam in the Mariana Islands.

Ray recalls, 'Whenever we would make a dive, we would be dropped off about 1,000 yards offshore and be

---

## VETERAN PROFILE

### Nicholas Loveless

---

in the water six to eight hours. Our job was to clear away mines, debris, sunken concrete and other obstacles so the landing barges could get to the beaches during the invasions. We were always under fire and we dove both during the daytime and at night. The Japanese either knew or suspected that we were out there. Our team made three dives at Guam and we lost one of our team. On one of the dives, our ship was hit by shore batteries while we were in the water, and another smaller ship was sent to pick us up. After that we went to Pearl Harbor for two weeks R&R.'

After R&R in Hawaii, Ray returned to the USS Kailua to form Team VIII, and by October, 1944, arrived off Leyte in preparation for the invasion of the Philippines. His team made two dives, blowing up mines and concrete obstructions to clear the way for the landing barges. By now they were using newer and more efficient equipment.

'In January, 1945,' Ray continues, team VIII made four dives at Iwo Jima on the 15th, 16th, and 17th, prior to the invasion. Again we cleared mines and other obstructions so the landing barges could make it to the beaches. We lost four team members at Iwo and all the team members were awarded the Navy commendation Medal. The team was split up after that and I was finally transferred to a submarine, the USS Razorback. The Razorback had already sunk a number of Japanese warships, troop transports and merchant ships, and we managed to sink more merchant ships before the war ended.'

