

Harry Loveless also fought to overco

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 Seventh Armored Division battled its way across France, Belgium, Holland, and were deep in the German heartland at Lubeck in May, 1945, when they linked up with elements of the Russian Army. When V-E Day was declared on May 8, only 30 of the original 180 men of Company A, 33rd Engineer Battalion of the Seventh were still with the Company, and one of their numbers, Harry Loveless was recuperating from shrapnel wounds at England General Hospital in Atlantic City.

Harry J. Loveless was born on Oct. 14, 1919, on his father's farm in Lawrence. He attended Lawrenceville Public School and Princeton high School, and in addition to working on the farm, assisted his father in his paperhanging trade in the Mercer county area.

He was inducted into the U.S. Army on Feb. 4, 1942, shortly after America's entry into the war. He entered basic training at Camp Polk, La., with the Third Armored Division and then transferred to the Seventh Armored, remaining with them during his military service. The Seventh trained at Camp Polk, Ft. Benning, Ga., and received desert training at Camp Coxcomb, Cal. As a combat engineer, Harry's battalion was responsible for building bridges, repairing roads, purifying water, planting and removing mines and booby traps,

installing and removing barbed wire, demolition, and many other tasks that were required to keep a combat division a mobile and effective fighting machine. In May, 1944, the Seventh was sent from Ft. Benning to Camp Shanks, N.Y., in preparation for overseas deployment.

On his last furlough home, Marie Bregenzer of Hopewell and Harry were married on Feb. 27, 1944. The honeymoon was brief, as were most wartime marriages, and within months Harry was with the Seventh on his way overseas.

On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the 'Lucky Seventh,' as the division was known boarded the Cunard Line 'Queen Mary' bound for England. Converted to a troop transport, the former luxury liner bore little resemblance to its pre-war elegance as thousands of soldiers crowded into its hull.

Additional combat maneuvers were completed on England's Salisbury Plain and the Seventh was ready for action.

Harry relates, 'After the Normandy break-through, the fighting was just below St. Lo when we crossed the English Channel in landing barges. Nobody knew for sure where the front was at the time, but we joined Patton's Third Army on the south flank of the 'Falaise Trap' and were up against the German Seventh Army. We entered a town one night just an hour after a German battalion had left.'

It was just getting daylight on the morning of Aug. 16 as Harry's half-track was approaching Chartres, when the Jerrys zeroed in on them. 'There were 12 of us from Company A riding in a half-track,' Harry con-

VETERAN PROFILE

Nicholas Loveless

tinues, 'when shell hit the front end of it. We thought later that it was an 88mm. We were all knocked unconscious by the concussion and when we came to, the half track was on fire and we didn't waste any time getting out of it. The motor was wrecked and the armored windshield blown away. Five of us were full of shrapnel and two men were blinded in their right eyes. I had one large piece through my right arm, paralyzing it, two smaller ones in my arm and hand, one in my right cheek and one in my left leg. About an hour later the medics arrived and gave us first aid and we were moved back to a field hospital.'

'It was several days before they worked on me at the field hospital. There was a German major on the cot next to me and he had several bullet wounds in his stomach. When the doctors came and told him they were taking him for surgery, I said, 'What about me, I've been here three days,' so they took me instead. The doctor gave me the piece of shrapnel he took from my arm for a souvenir.

'After five days in the field hospital, a C-47 stretcher plane landed in a pasture nearby and picked up all the wounded and flew us to the U.S. Army hospital at Hereford, England.'

After four months in England and another month in Scotland, Harry boarded the 'Queen Mary' once again for the return trip home. The

Statue of Liberty was a welcome sight for the 3,000 wounded men as they arrived at New York in January, 1945. At the hospital in Atlantic City, Harry underwent two more operations on his shattered right arm. A 3-inch bone removed from his left leg was grafted into his arm which eventually restored partial use of his arm. On Dec. 20 he was given a disability discharge at Camp Upton, N.Y. in time to be home for the Christmas holidays, which he had not spent with his family since 1941.

Harry and Marie lived in Hopewell for a short time and then settled in Lawrence. Marie became township clerk in 1956 and served in that capacity for 15 years until her retirement in 1970. Harry was employed by Samuel Hamill, then ELSA as plant operator, and then with Princeton University in the campus mail room until his retirement. They have three children, David, a teacher in the Hamilton Township school system; twins, Richard of East Haddam, Conn., and Helene of Ocala, Fla. David followed in his father's footsteps in the military and rose to the rank of colonel in the 50th Armored Division of the NJ National Guard, and has recently retired from the military. Two grandchildren, Sherry and Kimberly, are college students at Purdue and Florida State.

Thursday, March 30, 1995

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Harry Loveless at Camp Polk, La. in 1943.

Marie and Harry enjoy retirement and travel whenever they have an opportunity. In 1994, they spent two weeks in Europe with other former members of the Seventh Armored Division, and retraced the route the Seventh had taken 15 years earlier. At Margraten Cemetery where 7,000 American soldiers are buried, the former GIs held memorial services and Harry assisted in placing the wreath that was laid there honoring those that were lost in the war. Harry also keeps in touch with other old Company A buddies, and in 1969 organized company reunions which have since been held annually at various locations across the country. He is a member of American Legion Post 414, VFW Post 3022, the Seventh Armored Division Association and the Purple Heart Association.

In 1975, Harry and Marie moved to Rileyville Road, East Amwell, where they presently reside, but still maintain their relationships in Lawrence. They keep busy making crafts, gardening and are active with the East Amwell Senior Citizen Club. In a framed case over the fireplace there is a jagged piece of steel slightly smaller than a silver dollar, that was

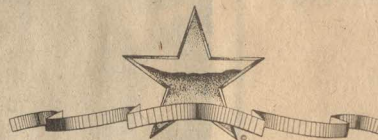
given to Harry by his doctor in the field hospital in France. It is a reminder of his ordeal over 50 years ago.

Nicholas Loveless is the brother of Harry Loveless.

The Veterans Memorial Committee is asking veterans from World War II and other conflicts to provide a photograph in uniform, along with their name, present address, branch of

service and unit, where and when they served, their principal assignment and a summary of their service. Their individual experiences or unusual stories are also welcomed. All photographs will be returned. Families of deceased veterans are also encouraged to submit articles.

All material should be sent to The Lawrence Township Veterans Memorial Committee, P.O. Box 55966, Trenton, N.J. 08638. Inquires may be made by calling 882-9108.



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