

## War Era Story Project 2012

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Age: 79

As I was born in 1933, I was just eight years old when WWII began. As a young lad, I do recall a few incidentals, such as the voice of President Franklin Roosevelt on our old Philco speaking to the nation, watching Dad use his rationing coupons when buying gasoline and Mom sending me down to Joe Weise's Market in the North end of Lima with a can of grease saved from her cooking. I believe that the grease was used in making ammunition for the war effort. Also, in grade school, we used to practice taking shelter in an underground tunnel that went from our school building to the rectory in case of an air raid.

My keenest memories though, would be of how the war affected some of my attitudes and those of our family. My Dad had been in the Ohio National Guard (1924/1927, Co. G, 148th Infantry) in the 1920s, and had attained the rank of Sgt. In early 1942, I believe that he was "draft bait" even though he was, age wise, at the upper end of the top draft age. I believe the top draft age at the time was around 38 or so. He was a photographer/engraver by trade working at the old Lima Photo and Engraving Co. in Lima. He was surprised when the Draft Board gave him a deferment due to his photography work with the Lima Locomotive Works and the Army Tank Plant. I guess that was deemed essential to the war effort. He never served in WWII, but would have, as he always had, a great affection for the military.

In the 1920s while Dad was in the National Guard, his brother (Louis Moore) also joined up. Uncle Louie was only 15 at the time, but as many did, he fibbed about his age and joined for the little pay and three squares each day. It was a job. Uncle Louie stayed in the military and eventually was in the Army. He served as a tank commander after being trained at Ft. Knox, Ky. He served in the North African campaign as a "tanker." In the invasion of Italy, he was taken prisoner by the Germans and spent a year or two in a POW camp. He was freed in 1945 by the Russians. While in the POW camp, his sister Beatrice joined up with the WACs (1943, I believe), in the hopes of trying to find out more information on where her brother Louie was being held. I don't think she ever was able to know where he was. After his release from the POW camp, Uncle Louie stayed in the Army, and in the 1950s he retired as a Major after thirty years in the military. Aunt Bea served until the end of the War.

Living in Lima as a kid, and not far from the B & O Railroad track, I remember seeing many military vehicles heading out of Lima on flat cars. I believe that employment in Lima, at that time, was really ramped up by production at such industries as the Sohio refinery, the ammunition plant, Westinghouse Electric, Lima Woolen Mills, the Army Tank Plant and the Lima Loco Works. Work was plentiful, especially for the many women who stepped up to fill many industrial jobs. "Rosie the Riveters" were not uncommon in Lima.

Another very fond memory of mine was the Lima Servicemen's Canteen, which was located near the junction of the B&O and the Penn. Railroads near downtown Lima. These wonderful ladies met troop trains stopping in Lima with free coffee, sandwiches and yummy baked goods. I myself, during the Korean War, was a recipient of this wonderful service. I remember one lady in particular, a Mrs. Mary Leppla. She was very active as a canteen lady, and what a welcoming group they were to see. They were a "feather in the hat" of the entire Lima community. Just another example of how the Lima area responded in a positive way in support of the troops and the war effort.

I believe that it was the sense of pride that I gained from my Dad and my Uncle Louie, that enkindled in me as a youth a great love and respect for our country and its military forces. Seeing how the Lima community had responded to the war effort also cemented that feeling of pride. I joined the military in 1952, and served in the Korean War with the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force as a communications specialist. I have a son who is a Lt. Col. presently serving in the Ohio Air National Guard. His wife was an Air Force nurse Captain, serving in the 1990s.