



Wheeler Talk: Leonard “Bud” Lomell, Local World War II Hero, Part 3

Transcript:

00;00;11;26 - 00;00;51;26

Allison

[ALLISON] Welcome back to Wheeler Talk. I'm your host, Allison, and I'm here to bring you part three of the Leonard “Bud” Lomell, local World War II hero podcast. Before we dive right in, I would like to thank the entire Lomell family for sharing their heartwarming memories of Len Lomell. I would especially like to thank Harry and Michael DiCorcia, Len Lomell’s nephews, and Renee Lomell, Bud Lomell’s daughter, who brought the legend of Len Lomell to life. Let's dive right in to part three.

00;00;51;29 - 00;02;24;15

Allison

[ALLISON] Len Lomell was discharged because of wounds on December 30th, 1945, following his service in World War II, Len Lomell led a full life alongside his wife, Charlotte Lomell, and focused on raising his daughters, Georgine, Pauline, and Renee, as well as Charlotte's sister, Jean's children Elizabeth and Jay Bergson after their mother sadly passed. In 1956, Mr. Lomell took a leap of faith and began his law practice. The Lomell Law Firm, as it was often later called, became the largest and most respected law firm in Ocean County. In the book titled Len Lomell: D-Day Hero, author Steven Ambrose includes part of a letter Budd wrote to his grandchildren in 1980. In the letter, Bud writes, “I've lived the American dream. Good job, good marriage, nice homes, cars, boats, travel, you name it. I've experienced it all. I even wound up with perfect kids and outstanding grandchildren. I went from a very poor, skinny boy starting on square one or at zero to millionaire status. I worked very hard throughout life and was determined to provide a good life, along with advanced education for my family.” Bud Lomell wrote like he owed these very achievements to a powerful moral compass hard work, sacrifice, discipline, and a stable and loving marriage to a partner who shared his ideals.

00;02;24;17 - 00;04;30;22

Allison

[ALLISON] Leonard Lowell passed from natural causes on March 1st, 2011 at the age of 91. An article published on NJ.com in 2011 describes how over 300 people attended Lomell’s funeral service to pay respects to a man who made a name for himself by rising to every occasion. In honor of his uncle and the Rangers of D company, Bud Lomell's nephew Harry worked diligently to champion the construction

of a monument erected at Point Pleasant Beach's Veterans Park. This monument was dedicated in 1999 and commemorates the heroism Len Lomell displayed on D-Day. Included in the monument is an exact cast replica of the grappling hook the Rangers used to climb Pointe du Hoc, donated by friends in Normandy. For interested locals, you can also visit the Leonard "Bud" Lomell Meeting Room on the first floor, Toms River Town Hall and view a small collection of original artifacts. The impression that Bud Lomell left on Ocean County and the world has persisted, even though in this podcast I'm sharing his story because it resonates as strongly today as it ever did. I'd like to end part three's introduction with a quote from Mark Mutter, Toms River historian and friend of Bud Lomell, quote, "If the 20th century was the American century - and it was - if the seminal event of that century was World War II - and it was - if the turning point of that war was D-Day and the invasion of Normandy - and it was - and if Allied victory depended upon a military success at a promontory known as Pointe du Hoc - and it did - and if climbing those cliffs and disabling those guns turns the tide of that battle - and it did - then we were in the midst of a man who turned history for the better and advanced the cause of freedom and democracy." End quote.

00;04;30;25 - 00;05;28;10

Allison

[ALLISON] At this time, I'm going to turn the podcast over to Bud Lomell's nephews, Michael DiCorcia and Harry DiCorcia, who will share a special reading of a document that Bud Lomell himself wrote detailing his experience during the war. Michael and Harry will also share some heartwarming memories of their dear uncle. Michael DiCorcia is a Vietnam veteran who served with the 82nd airborne from 1968 to 1971. Harry DiCorcia is a retired Point Pleasant Beach police detective who has recently retired from teaching criminal justice and homeland security classes at both Ocean County College and Thomas Edison State College. I thank both Michael and Harry, for their service. I also want to thank Renee Lomell once again, for sharing her memories of her father, and for being the incredibly kind and strong woman she is. And to the entire Lomell family. Thank you.

00;05;28;12 - 00;07;51;01

Harry

[HARRY] As a young boy in school, I remember playing with a matchbox car, something came across and I asked my mother, I said, "Mom, Uncle Bud's a lawyer, right?" She looked at me and said, "Yeah, he's a lawyer. He's also a war hero." And I went, "Oh," went about my business. And I guess it wasn't until 1979 that the book Brother's Rangers came out by Ronald Lane. And then I got to read the whole history and then let's skip forward to - I think it was my youngest daughter's first communion or something - we had a party at my house, which we always did. And it was funny because my kids knew that - they were worried with so many people being at this outside party at our house. You know, what If it rains? And one of my daughters said, "Uncle Bud and Aunt Charlotte are coming. It never rains when they come." And you know what? I can't remember a party where it had. Pretty amazing. But, at that party, that was in 1998. The trailers for Saving Private Ryan were just coming out, and, we grabbed Uncle Bud in the kitchen and said, "Hey, you're going back to France again?" He said, "Yeah. Next June is the 55th anniversary." Said, "Gee, I'd like to go with you." He says, "Great. I'm going to California next week. When I get back, I'll send you the whole itinerary and, we'll talk about it." Even told me, "2,500 bucks. You're going to have a great time. A lot of my rangers were police officers. They'll get along with you just great." I said "Okay." And I thought about it, and, I was down here for grand jury, and I would always

stop at their house on the way back. And, there was a couple of weeks later, I said, "How was California? How's Pauline doing?" As his daughter lives out there, figuring that's where he went. He said, "We didn't get to see her this time." Said, "No? What were you doing in California?" Well, they went out for the premiere of Saving Private Ryan, and I went "Really?" And the comparisons of that and, and the movie, the opening scene is truly one that's earth-shaking.

00;07;51;03 - 00;09;48;24

Harry

[HARRY] And on that trip, we had gone through Normandy. We're on the ferry back to Weymouth, England. And I remember talking with General John Rayne, who was at the fifth Ranger Battalion, and they were just talking about it, and we just experienced all of Normandy and all of celebrations that went along with this anniversary and how revered these men were. And I said in the conversation, I said, you know, I said, "When I saw the opening scene of the movie, I knew I had to come here. That movie was so real that I just had to see this for myself." And with that General Rayne turned to me and he said, "That movie wasn't real. The real thing was 100 times worse." And I said, "Well, who am I to argue with you?" But, it was one of the greatest trips. They loved us in France. They loved us in England. Another quick story about England: where the Rangers left from Weymouth, England, is on Weymouth Bay and there's a promenade there. And the English were so grateful for the American help in the war that they made an American war monument right on the promenade there in Weymouth, England. They later rededicated it on one of our trips and included a photo of A company going to the boats to get along, to go over to France. But what's really interesting about that is behind that American war monument at Weymouth Bay is what's called the Royal Hotel, and the Royal Hotel is where King George the Third was staying when we started the American Revolution. So right across the street from that is the American War Monument. I just thought that was interesting. You knew that, right?

00;09;48;26 - 00;09;54;04

Allison

[ALLISON] Now, was it France who gifted the cast of the grappling hook that's on display?

00;09;54;06 - 00;11;36;20

Harry

[HARRY] Yes, and again, Jean Marc LeFranc, who was regional senator at one point and at one time the mayor of Grandcamp-Maisy, which was the first town liberated by the Rangers. And, I guess the 55th anniversary, they had a monument made in Grandcamp-Maisy, with a replica grapple hook. And actually the coastline of France was the base of it. That miniaturized version of it to show where this took place. The idea came along that at first I was trying to see if the town would rename Trenton Avenue, where Uncle Bud grew up, to Lomell Avenue. Again, silly reasons being a police officer there. Our Trenton Avenue was broken up into three separate sections from Ocean Avenue to the lake, from the other side of the lake to the railroad tracks, and then from the highway into Point Pleasant Borough. And I figured, well, if we just rename this, it won't confuse the paramedics then when they go over to a certain address on Trenton Avenue. And council thought it was a great idea. But, people came out of the woodwork and said, I don't want to change my checkbook, my driver's license, and this and that. But it was then, Mayor Jack Pizzola who, got behind it and said, "We're going to do something." And we came up with the idea for the monument, and I said, well, let me call John Marc LeFranc and see if they have

another grapple hook. He says, "Well, they don't, but we can make you the replica like we put on the monument over in France." So it was a gift from him and the people of Grandcamp-Maisy that enabled us to do that monument in Point Pleasant Beach.

00;11;36;22 - 00;11;46;02

Allison

[ALLISON] It seems like scaling the cliffs is a little bit harder than changing your driver's license. Just my opinion.

00;11;46;04 - 00;12;09;26

Harry

[HARRY] I would agree. But, Yeah. And again, we dedicated that monument on December 4th, 1999. So this was from just that June. I was in France and we got it done by December 4th, which was my mother's birthday. And, you know, we were worried an outside ceremony at the bandshell. Guess what?

00;12;09;28 - 00;12;11;04

Allison

[ALLISON] Did it rain?

00;12;11;06 - 00;12;18;06

Harry

[HARRY] And it was one of the most beautiful December days that I can remember. It was warm. It was just great.

00;12;18;08 - 00;12;21;25

Allison

[ALLISON] What did he think about the monument?

00;12;21;27 - 00;12;39;13

Harry

[HARRY] Well, first of all, he went over carefully every word that's written on that plaque. And I think what made him most proud is above it is the scroll of the second Ranger Battalion. That means something to him and his men.

00;12;39;15 - 00;12;54;16

Allison

[ALLISON] That was something that Renee and I spoke about a lot, and something that stood out to me when I was reading about him is that whenever you would ask him what he did, he always mentioned the other Rangers. It was never just about him.

00;12;54;23 - 00;13;24;07

Harry

[HARRY] That's true. I used to take him to schools and things like this where he would give talks a lot. You know, that was one on one in Ocean and Monmouth County. But, if somebody wanted to interview

him, he would want somebody else from his battalion or his company there. It was that way, if I embellish, they hold me back or if I forget something, they would remind me. And he was just one of the most honest, true gentleman you could ever hope to meet.

00;13;24;09 - 00;14;54;04

Michael

[MICHAEL] And when for me, I was a little bit older and growing up, every Sunday was a big trip to come to Toms River to visit Uncle Bud and Aunt Charlotte and the girls. I always remember on Sundays we used to - your dad used to order pizza all the time for us. And I always found my way up to the second floor of the house. Over here on Washington Street. By the way, I used to help granddad refurbish the house when your dad bought the house to make it into the home and the law office. So I knew a lot of the little ins and outs of it and things that we found. Anyway, the upstairs, I found my way in the hallway, and there were these little cubbyholes. And inside the cubbyholes were certain things. And, of course, I found the army stuff. I found a Civil War rifle that was given to your dad. That Civil War had his helmet, that he wore all kinds of paraphernalia. And I was really, really into the Army and stuff like that, not even knowing that I would eventually need all this stuff for the years coming down the line. But I always loved going there and I always remember your mom coming to look for me, because I always got lost and she knew where to find me because I was caught in a little cubby hole and I was pulling stuff out.

00;14;54;07 - 00;17;42;28

Michael

[MICHAEL] So, one of my, main remembrances, excuse me, from, my kids, my granddaughter, she was in eighth grade in the Jackson Township school, and, they all the kids I always made my kids and then my grandkids and my two little great granddaughters now, know Uncle Bud and who he is, of course. My the two little ones have never met him, of course, but my other grandkids did meet him, and they remember him well because I, we always used to come to the house and, you and my granddaughter had this assignment because her teacher found out that Len Lomell was like her uncle, quote unquote, down the line. And her assignment was to talk to him and write a report about something about Lieutenant Lomell and his, what he did in World War II. And so she called me and, I said, "Sure, we'll go over to Uncle Bud's house." And I took her two brothers and her and I went there. I went there by myself. I can't even go with that trip. So we went into the war room. That was where Uncle Bud got a lot of the memorabilia and things and artifacts that were given to him over the years for their appreciation, what he did and things like that. And so, I told Uncle Bud why we were there, and he said, "Sure, that's fine, come on in, Jordan." And we went in the room. We were sitting there and he said, "The first thing I want you to do is take this paper," - and it was up to about 4 or 5 pages, "And read it. And that'll tell you exactly what our Ranger Battalion did before you ask me any questions." And so she was like, "Okay." Like she wasn't expecting that at all. None of us were. And your mom and I sat on the sofa there, and, the two other boys were, like, looking at all the things around the room. She read the little thing and came back in the room and sat down next to Uncle Bud and said, "I do have one question for you." And these kids are pretty smart. And Jordan goes, "Uncle Bud, what medal means the most to you? Of all the things that you received, for all the heroic things that you've done?" And he goes, and I saw him and your mom sitting next to me goes like this gives me the elbows. And she whispers to me, "No one has ever asked him that question, ever." And so she said, "I want to see what this answer is going to be too."

00;17;43;00 - 00;19;51;22

Michael

[MICHAEL] And so he went on and described all the things that he had done really. And again, it wasn't, just like you said, Chip, it wasn't him. And Sergeant Keane, Keane mentioned all the people that were involved in all the different little aspects and things that he did. And he said to her at the end and she was writing away, you know, furiously trying to write everything down as he was talking. And he goes, you know, honey. And he grabbed her and hug her and gave her a big kiss. And he even said, "No one ever asked me that question before. That's why you had to do so much writing." So she got a kick out of that. And we still talk about that today. So he was, you know, I guess Len Lomell, Bud Lomell, he was Uncle Bud to us. And he was a real person. If you took that man and then took everything that he did and everything that he went through and try to put him together, it - You know, this man is too nice. You know, too smart, too well rounded, know, too kind to do anything like that. And I remember before I went overseas, when I was in the Army before going to Vietnam, I remember calling Uncle Bud, and that was - we had like my mother and father were always big with parties, and they had everybody there. And Uncle Bud talked to me and he goes, "You know, you know, I couldn't be in the 82nd Airborne Division." He said, "That's a good division because they had a lot of guys on D-Day that jumped out of the planes on Normandy, the 82nd airborne especially, and what they were landing they were blown all off course." And he had a lot of those guys that would join up with them as they proceeded through Normandy and then into France, liberating towns. So he said, "That's a good outfit. You'll go well with them. I know you. You dealt with them." So that's why I was really proud to be with the 82nd Airborne Division.

00;19;51;24 - 00;21;24;19

Michael

[MICHAEL] And so for me to be over there in that situation and I heard all the stories, there was a kid from school that shot himself in the foot just to avoid the draft back then. This is back in the 60s. So was, you know, the hippies were around and guys I went to school with, like, dodging the draft and stuff like that, but I didn't want to do that. I want to do that mainly because of your dad. That's the main reason why I really - everything that I did over there, and I accomplished a lot quickly and quickly gained some rank real quick because I always thought, "Uncle Bud, what would he do?" And things like this, I, I really did. I always had him sort of like with me over there for the year that I spent over there, and honestly, I would never go to him and tell him that because I know the way that he is again, being not for himself but for the his men around him, everything would be diverted. "Well, no, I wouldn't have done that. I'd done that. But we would have done this. Yeah, we I think you and I would have done this." So that I always kept inside. In fact, now to this day, actually for 12, 14 months now, I've been going to a VA doctor to talk about my experiences because... doesn't like me waking up yelling and screaming and which I still do to this day, but it's always because I always held everything in. And now these guys want me to get it out.

00;21;24;21 - 00;23;11;29

Michael

[MICHAEL] So I keep a journal and I write all this stuff down, stuff I never would have done. Geez, if mom and dad ever knew what I did over there, they would die. That wouldn't believe it. So I always kept

everything inside. But talking about it, everything I'd write down now, the first thing I start thinking about is my uncle and what he did. And, things that I went through that I thought were bad, I would stop and think. I said, this isn't that bad. Just think about what the Rangers had to go through. What Uncle Bud looking for these guns. I mean, fighting tooth and nail, getting to the top of this Pointe du Hoc and not finding them. Now look at that. It felt like, you know, this is your mission. They're not there, but his intuitiveness and just being him, he knew what to do. Okay, they're not here. They're somewhere. And he went off and they found them. Things like that always stuck with me. All that, you know, throughout my life. And now I'm getting older. Things are all coming out, but it all reverts back to him and I didn't tell you this, but I could never tell my mom that. Mom, it just isn't like that, you know? And dad's the same way. They're very emotional people and always protective of us. So, like, I always thought anything that I did, they're not going to know that stuff. Like, we can do stuff like all the pictures I have at home of me holding a puppy dog with a nice tan, with my love beads on when we're not in combat and stuff like that. That was just pictures that I showed to people and that's what people know about my experiences, but I just bring everything back.

00;23;12;02 - 00;23;15;02

Harry

[HARRY] I remember the one picture you turned 21 over there.

00;23;15;07 - 00;23;16;29

Michael

[MICHAEL] Yes.

00;23;17;02 - 00;23;24;25

Harry

[HARRY] My parents sent him a small box of miniature liquor bottles, and that was the one picture that - he's sitting in the jungle there.

00;23;24;25 - 00;24;12;06

Michael

[MICHAEL] And I'm glad. I'm glad you said that. Because you know who else sent me one too? Uncle Bud - your mom and dad sent me something. My birthday is June the 6th of all weird coincidences. I was born in '48, not '44, but June 6th. So, like, that's all very, you know, special day for me just because of that. Not my birthday, but just what they did. But I remember I got it and they said, "Here's a packet for you from the States." So I got it, opened it up, was from Uncle Buddy and Aunt Charlotte, just a little gift pack of liquor for celebrating my 21st birthday, so I'm glad you brought that up. It's great. I love that picture. That's one of my favorite pictures because of who sent it to me.

00;24;12;08 - 00;25;40;06

Harry

[HARRY] Just jump back to the first trip over to France again. We land in Paris. We take the bus from Paris to - I guess it was Grandcamp Maisy. And we're having a little reception in the gym where there had to be 7 to 10 Rangers. You weren't on that one? There was probably ten living rangers that returned with their family members, because we certainly had two bustles. And, a lot of the family members got

to meet and know each other on the trip. But when we pulled into the reception area, the people outside were lined up with American flags and French flags, and they were just waiting to see their liberators. And uncle Bob always in the front of the bus, always the leader. He stood up and he looked at everybody and he said, okay, everybody stand up, let's go. In two by two, I brought my daughters with me, two of them anyway, on that trip. And I just sat there and he's walking down and says, "Let's go." And he looks at me and he goes, "I said everybody!" And I go, "We didn't do any-," and he made us march in there with these French people applauding us. I, I was out of place. But it was unbelievable the respect that they had over there for the Americans.

00;25;40;08 - 00;26;32;14

Allison

[ALLISON] You know, when I first spoke to Renee, there was something that you said that really stuck with me, and it was that your dad always had the saying, "anticipate the need," either when he was at war or when he was at home. And it's so strange because that was a while ago now that you and I spoke. But I find myself that pops into my head almost on a daily basis. I'll be at home, you know, with my partner Tom, and he'll look cold and I'll just go get a blanket because that's in my head. He just seemed like such a perceptive person and so many different sides of him. Like you were saying that the two people don't seem like they would go together. And I think what's so interesting about that is that there seems to be so many different sides of him, which might be why so many people connect with him. There's a little bit of something, you know, that you can kind of attach to.

00;26;32;15 - 00;26;34;20

Michael

[MICHAEL] Everybody can take a little piece of them like.

00;26;34;23 - 00;28;14;16

Allison

[ALLISON] Yeah, that's so fascinating to me. I like that a lot. I grew up in Jackson, and I didn't know about him at all until I moved to this area. And, you know, Tom went to Toms River South. And so that's when I started to hear the name Lomell. But it still wasn't really making sense to me because I didn't grow up around here. I didn't know the stories. And then I started to hear little bits of the story. It was really interesting. I heard that you were a teacher at South. Everything's starting to make sense why everybody knows this family's name. And so I started reading more and reading more and reading more. And when the article came up about the VA clinic and I was like, I need to actually learn more about this. And that's when I started reading Bud Lomell: D-Day Hero. And I think Mark Mutter came in to Wheeler one day while it was on the desk. And he can attest there were probably like 180 Post-Its in the book. And he points at it and he starts laughing. And it was because every single page, there were multiple things that was just amazing. And I wanted to remember to the point where when I sat down to write the questions, it took me a very long time because I didn't want to overwhelm you with 180 questions. But that was the point where I really was like, wow, that I get it now. This person really did amazing things, and that's why I thank you all so much for agreeing to do this podcast, because I think that other people are hearing more of the personal, intimate story and connecting with it the way that I did. And those stories keep people alive, right? It keeps him alive. It keeps what he did alive. And I just think that's wonderful.

00;28;14;16 - 00;29;08;06

Harry

[HARRY] And I think all our kids and grandkids certainly are aware. And I say my grandkids because I have Maeve who's going to be seven next week. And then her little sister, whose name is Darby Lomell Williams. Darby, started the Rangers in World War II. And of course, as I remember posting her picture on Facebook, where we still the descendants of Rangers of World War II Sons and Daughters Organization, friends with many of them on Facebook and still keep in touch with them and wish them happy birthdays. I put the picture of Darby up and I got a response. She's got big boots to fill.

00;29;08;09 - 00;33;46;18

Michael

[MICHAEL] Hill 400, the Hurtgen Forest, December 7th, 1944. Lieutenant Len Lomell, recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, Second Ranger Battalion, D Company, U.S. Army. Late on the evening of December 6th, 1944, the second Ranger Battalion boarded trucks and under cover of darkness and by circuitous back roads through the Hurtgen Forest, were taken close to the town of Bergstein, Germany. My name is Len Lomell, and I was lieutenant of the first platoon of D company. Companies A, B, and C were assigned to defend a town which was still partially occupied by German troops. Our battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Rutter, had assigned a special mission to D company to supply a patrol to investigate the possibility of assaulting Hill 400, located on the outskirts of Bergstein. The patrol was to discover evidence of pillboxes, bunkers and enemy troop strength and position, but through all of this time the patrol was to go undetected. I set out with my patrol at 3:30 a.m. and returned with the desired information to the battalion forward C.P. at 6 a.m. the plans were quickly reviewed. D company would be kept in reserve for reinforcements. D and F companies assembled near the church and cemetery in the partially sunken road that paralleled the base of Hill 400, about 100 yards away. F company was on the left. D company was on the right. The assault was to begin at 7:30 a.m. sharp. Hill 400 or Castle Hill, loomed 400m high, 1312ft at a 45 degree angle, thickly wooded with evergreens. The German observation post on the summit enabled the Germans to control the artillery fire against the allies in the Ruhr River Valley. Approach to the Rhine River crossings. A German artillery barrage started just as I led the first platoon of D company across 100 yards of half-frozen mud and snow, yelling and shooting randomly, we were at a dead run, facing small arms fire with creeping enemy artillery in the rear. Sigurd Sunbeam took out a machine gun nest. My C.O., Captain McBride, was wounded and evacuated at this time. I reached the top of the hill first with Sam O'Neill and several others, but first platoon quickly followed by second platoon. Sergeant Harvey Koenig and his patrol chased Germans over the crest almost to the Rohr River, before returning to deploy along the forward crest. Meanwhile, Sam and I neutralized an enemy troop and weapons bunker by throwing a grenade through the forward aperture. At this time, the CO of F company, Aron Mazzini, arrived with two F company men and assigned them with two D company men to remove the German prisoners and return them to the rear. It was just 8:30 a.m.. The men of both D and F companies found great difficulty in digging foxholes in the rocky terrain. This hilltop was covered with large evergreen trees, except in the area of the observation post or bunker at the summit. The almost continuous artillery shelling was devastating as they shells detonated immediately upon hitting the trees, causing the trees to come crashing down along with a shower of shrapnel, killing and wounding many men. It was horrendous. The heavy German artillery barrages would lift from time to time to allow German ground troops to counterattack the hill. The

German attacking forces numbered in excess of 150 men. The first counterattack came about 9:30 to 10 a.m. The firefights and assaults were at close range and from time to time resulted in hand-to-hand combat.

00;33;46;20 - 00;37;07;29

Harry

[HARRY] Near the top of the hill, the large enemy troop and weapons bunker was put to use as a hospital for the many badly wounded rangers, as well as some of the German casualties who were unable to withdraw. Unfortunately, it was a hospital without medical supplies, all medical supplies having been used up early in the day, and no supplies were getting through from the rear. Some of the Rangers were out of ammunition and forced to use captured German weapons to fight with. By 11:30, my left index finger was hanging by a tendon, so I cupped it in the palm of my hand and studied my submachine gun in the crook of my arm. I was also bleeding from concussion, as were many other rangers. Some were bleeding from their ears, nose or mouth from concussions due to the constant shelling. At times, Hill 400 felt as if it was trembling, as though an earthquake was taking place. Shortly after noontime, the CO of F company was captured by the Germans, which left me, the ranking Ranger officer in charge. By then, radio communications hit by shrapnel, were out from the top of the hill to the battalion and company headquarters, necessitating the use of D company runners in mid-afternoon noon to keep contact with the rear and try to bring ammunition, medical supplies and reinforcements up the hill. Often the hill would be surrounded by German combat patrols, and the runners would have to infiltrate. The afternoon attacks resulted in many more wounded men. No fighting reinforcements arrived the first day. At 9 p.m., several E and C company men reached the top of the hill to help in the evacuation of the wounded. So many trees had been felled, crossing one another's trunks and stumps that evacuation by litter was extremely difficult. At times, men had to be dragged on the ground one shoulder haft for a considerable distance under trees that had fallen. I sustained another shrapnel wound and was evacuated by 10:30 p.m., 65 D company men had started the assault. 55 made it to the top of the hill. Only 15 walked away. I was one of them. We lost more men there than on D-Day, June 6th, 1944, when we climbed the cliffs of Pointe a Hawk during the Normandy invasion. However, December 7th, 1944 was my longest day. Originally, D and F companies were to be relieved within 24 hours, but it was not until 40 hours later that they had been relieved by the 13th Infantry Regiment of the eighth Infantry Division late on the afternoon of December 8th, 1944. On December 16th, 1944, the Germans retook Hill 400 using this observation post to protect the flank of its army during the Battle of the Bulge.

00;37;08;01 - 00;37;46;08

Michael

[MICHAEL] In the United States Army, there were 3000 Rangers, 3000 replacement Rangers in World War II. Three of those Rangers came from Point Pleasant Beach - Len Lomell of Second Battalion, Company D, John Wardell, Second Battalion Company E, and William Boyd, Fifth Battalion Company E, all served with the Rangers in World War II.

00;37;46;10 - 00;38;10;01

Allison

[ALLISON] Thank you for listening to this special three-part episode of Wheeler Talk, in honor of the life and legacy of Leonard “Bud” Lomell. Tune in next time for another blast from the past.

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Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Hello, adventurers! If you enjoyed this content, please take a look at the Ocean County Library's new podcast called Forge Your Imagination: A Guide to Immersive Worldbuilding. This new podcast is dedicated to helping creative individuals design their own expertly crafted worlds for books, games, Dungeons and Dragons, and more. Tune in on the first Wednesday morning of every month to learn more. Thanks for listening and safe travels, adventures.