

A Brave Man

A young man from Sunset, LA, Harold J. Burleigh, served in the United States Navy under the command of Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, commander of the third fleet. AM3 Burleigh proudly served his country on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. St. Lo (CVE-63) as an aircraft mechanic.

Harold's most memorable war time experience took place in October of 1944, during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The battle claimed the lives of thousands of soldiers from both sides and dozens of ships. During the fierce battle, kamikaze pilots desperately tried to sink the American fleet. One such kamikaze struck the flight deck of the St. Lo causing a large explosion which would soon sink the ship. Harold recalls hearing a voice, only moments before the plane crashed into the deck, telling him to move...which he did quickly.

The St. Lo sank a short thirty minutes later, dumping Harold and hundreds of his shipmates into the oily, burning and blood-filled waters. While treading water for close to ten hours, Harold witnessed many horrible things, mainly in the form of shark attacks. Harold told stories of many sailors that were very close to him being taken under the water, never to be seen again. I am proud to say that this brave survivor is my great grandfather.

Emily Roy
1st Place Carencro Veterans Day Essay Contest
St. Ignatius 8th Grade Student