

## Robert Lee Whitney

Born 12/31/1898  
Milwaukee

Died:

Service # 36-703-920

Period of Service: WW I and  
WW II , Marine Corps

Source: Am Legion  
scrapbook – box 17

Entered service at Milwaukee 4/3/1918, and sent to Parris Island, SC.

Discharged 9/19/1919 # 186138.

He trained extensively for seven weeks, then the company was split up and 45 were sent to France as replacements, and the rest including Whitney were dispersed among various ships, posts and ammunition depots. He and thirty others were sent to increase the guard at the Naval Ammunition Depot, at St. Juliene Creek, Portsmouth, VA. He was kept there until discharge, with a marksman medal.

He then registered with the draft board ( in Maywood, IL) when WW II broke out while he was working at the Buick Aviation Plant in Melrose Park, and received a 1-A classification on 9/21/1942. He was called to service on 10/24/1942, but given time to finish his civilian work, and reported for active duty on 11/7/1942 at Camp Grant, IL.

He was assigned to the Army Air Force and sent to Miami Beach, FL for basic training and exams on 11/11/1942 (“24 years to the day after the war to end wars,” he noted). There he was assigned as armorer and sent to Buckley Field, CO, in charge of barracks. He graduated about 2/26/1943, and shipped to Westover Field, Chicopee, MA. He was then assigned to the 379<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group which was then being formed. They trained at Bradley Field, CT where the planes were being received. At Bridgeport, CT, they were given gunnery training and gotten ready for duty.

The planes moved through Camp Mills, Mitchell Air Field (US # 159) where they flew escort missions as the 9<sup>th</sup> AAF was being formed.

As invasion day neared, they moved to #412 near Maidstone, and bombed and strafed enemy installations and rocket sites. The first buzz bombs went over at treetop height, but the Germans improved them as they gained more knowledge.

On invasion day they stood for support but weren’t needed. As a footing was gained, they were prepared to follow. They were to have occupied the airfield at Caen, but failure to take it in time forced them to move to airstrip #A12 then being cleared near Baleroy, France, which they did by entering France through Omaha Beach in July, 1944.

They flew close support to armor and ground forces, and followed through St. Lo to a newly taken field #A27 near Rennes, France where they flew mission to the Brest Peninsula until it was secured. They

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then moved to Paris to airfield #A79 at Mourmelon, east of Rheims, supporting Patton's Armored Division. Successive moves were to #A82 near Etain near the Battle of the Bulge. Then to #473 near Eddersheim at Frankfort, and then to #R10 near Nuremburg, out of which they were operating when the Germans gave up. Then to #R68 at Straubi where he arranged for a discharge.

He left on Liberty Ship *Middleton* with 100 men, about all the ship could carry. He was discharged for the second time at Ft Sheridan on 7/31/1945, honorable.

His campaigns were Air Offensive Europe, Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe.

His citations were the Distinguished Unit Badge, first Bronze Leaf Cluster, Good Conduct, ETO ribbon with one Silver Star, and the Bronze Battle Star, and marksmanship, rifle.

He joined the American Legion in Lake Forest in 1930, also one in Kenosha, Wheaton Post, Estes Park, CO post, and then in 1949 American Legion Post 402 when he spent the winter here with his mother Anne Whitney in 1948.