Destination Lodi

A Historical Journey

Veterans Day

Veteran Day formerly known as Armistice Day was originally set as a U.S. legal holiday to honor the end of World War 1 which officially took place on November 11, 1918.

I wanted to find something or someone to write about to celebrate Veterans Day. Lodi has had many heroes that have served in each branch of the armed forces.

Richard “Dick” A. Crum (1924-2016) was born in Lodi, graduate of Lodi High 1942. Enlisted on June 27, 1942, serving in Company “C” 26th Infantry Regiment, a part of the first infantry Division of the Big Red One. The nickname “Big Red One” originated from the division insignia a large red number “1” on a khaki field. Adopted during WW 1 when the “1” was the first American division arrived in France. Dick served in North Africa and Europe. Participated in two amphibious D-Day operations, invasion of Sicily and Normandy, France June 6, 1944. He served in 5 campaigns during WW 2.

D-day, June 6, 1944, “Dick” was 20, a private in the U.S. Army. Already a veteran of combat, he was the third wave of the largest seaborne invasion in military history. As stated in an article, Dick described the experience. Struggling to shore, Crum said “all we knew at that point was that there had been an invasion and that men and materials were on the beach.” He described up to his neck in ocean. His feet weighed by water filled leggings. Holding his carbine high, a condom taped over the barrel to keep it dry. Frantic men around him afraid of drowning, clinging to comrades who struggled towards the beach, the one called Omaha.

Plenty of dead and wounded men as American forces suffered nearly 1,500 dead among the 50,000 men who hit Omaha Beach.

Dick had returned twice to Normandy after his retirement and attended several reunions of his old unit

When Dick passed in 2016, in his obituary it was stated “Old Soldiers never die they only fade away”.

Thank you to all who served.