

## TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM "BILL" LYTLE

BY TONY BIGGIO

William "Bill" Lytle was born and raised in Orrville, Ohio. Bill played high school football, basketball and track at Western Reserve from 1936-40 and graduated from there.

There were rumors of war, so Bill signed up for a one year enlistment in January, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor extended Bill's enlistment to five years.

Bill was a captain in the Army Air Corps and his rating was group bombardier-navigator. His group of thirty-six planes were A-26's. These were twin engine low level light attack bombers. They would strafe Panzer units and seal off bridges. Bill would "call the shot" using the new Norden bombsight.

The group initially flew out of England about forty miles north-east of London. After D-Day, they flew off the mainland. The Germans left one airfield at 10:00 a.m. and Bill's guys landed there at 3:00 p.m. the same day. Everything was bobby-trapped. They always kept advancing airfields. The area of attack was always four or five miles ahead of General George Patton's Army. Bill was never injured and he survived three crash landings. Bill was awarded the French medal for bravery, the Croix De Guerre.

Bill's story would not be complete without telling of the woman he loved and married. Bill had dated Peg before the war, they were both from Orrville. After his training, Bill called Peg and said "I have ten days to get from Carlsbad, New Mexico to Lake Charles, Louisiana. If I swing up through Orrville, will you marry me?" Silence! "Did you hear me?" "Yes." "Ask your mother." "She's not here. She is playing bridge." "Well, will you marry me?" "Yes." Peg and Bill were married in 1943. She followed him to Lake Charles and taught forty-six first graders for \$100. per month.

After World War II, Bill and Peg returned home, and with the help of the wonderful GI Bill, he graduated from College of Optometry at Ohio State University. Bill practiced in Wooster for 35 years. He was Mayor of Wooster from 1961 to 1963. He joined Wooster Rotary in 1949 and has been a member for fifty-five years.

Bill and Peg have two children. Jim was mentally retarded. Bill, Bob Anderson and former Rotarian Joe Fischelson started what later became Ida Sue School. That was a time when there was much stigma regarding mental illness. In fifty years, Ida Sue School has grown to serve 465 kids.

Jim was always pleasant. He had paper route for sixteen years and was 100% reliable. Jim could not make change, so he gave he gave the punch and ring cards to his customers and said "Here, you do it." He was never shortchanged.

Jim had a routine and it was not to be changed. Clyde Webb was at the end of Jim's paper route. One day, Clyde saw Jim at the start of his route and said "Let me have my paper now, I am going into town." Jim said "No." Clyde asked, "Why not." "It's not your turn." replied Jim.

Bill and Peg's daughter, Jean, works at the Nick Amster Workshop and is in charge of a group of eight workers. Jim passed away two years ago and Peg died three years ago.

Bill Lytle has a wonderful outlook on life. It reflects eternal optimism and a sense of humor. On World War II Bill said "I do not know what war would be like on the ground. But flying is peaceful up there. Sure, there are flak explosions but it is abstract. It is not personal, they were shooting at the whole group." On having a retarded son, Bill said "I think my purpose after having a retarded son was to help start a place like Ida Sue School. On July 17, 2005, they will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. On caring for his wife Peg, Bill said "Peg's health declined and life frankly became difficult. Peg always had a sense of humor. She was good for me. I owed it to her." They were married for 59 years.

Bill Lytle has a lot of nice qualities and now you know the rest of the story.