

## Nuggets of Fun and Nostalgia for Treasure Valley Golden-Agers

### WWII Vet Gets Medal After 80 Years

By Caitlin Keading

For nearly 80 years, World War II veteran and D-Day survivor William “Willie” Kellerman hadn’t received official recognition of his sacrifices due to a paperwork error. That changed in June 2022, when the 97-year-old was presented with a Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Prisoner of War Medal by the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army in Brooklyn, New York.

“I feel like I have been living in a shadow and I’ve turned the lights on,” Kellerman said. “I will never forget the experience I had back in 1945.”

After growing up in the Bronx during the Great Depression, 19-year-old Kellerman ended up on a war ship off the shores of Normandy on June 6, 1944, which became known as D-Day. Within days, he landed on Utah Beach, France, joining the fight against the Nazis.

Just a few weeks later, on July 4, Kellerman’s radio was shot while he faced heavy gunfire. With no way to communicate, his captain sent him to find his Battalion’s headquarters.

“I said, ‘Where do I go?’” recalls Kellerman, a private first class at the time, “and he just said, ‘Just head that way.’”

But as he was jumping through hedgerows and dodging bullets, Kellerman came face-to-face with a German tank and was taken prisoner.

“They came out of the tank with machine guns,” says Kellerman, who had to stay with the Nazis in a tent that night. “The next day they took me back where they had about 60 to 70 other Americans that they had captured.”

Kellerman recalls being given one slice of bread a day and only being able to walk at night. “Our planes would shoot anything moving in the daylight,” he explains.



*(Continued on page 2)*

### Return Visit

An 83-year-old Army veteran arrived in Paris by plane for a vacation with his family.

As he was fumbling in his bag for his passport a stern French customs agent asked if he had been to France before.

He replied that he had indeed been to France before.

The agent sarcastically said, “Then you should know to have your passport out and ready for me, sir!”

The old veteran replied calmly, “I didn’t have to show it the last time I was here.”

“Impossible!!” the customs agent said. “All foreigners have always had to show a passport to enter France!”



This time the man leaned over and responded in a whisper, “Well, when I came ashore on D-Day in 1944, I couldn’t find a single Frenchman to show it to!”



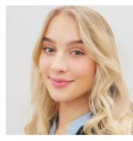
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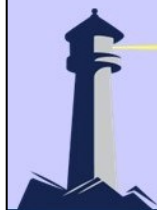
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**WHEN EACH MOMENT COUNTS**

## A Good Deed



A man died and appeared before the pearly gates.

“Have you ever done anything of particular merit?” St. Peter asked.

“Well, I can think of one thing,” the man offered. “Once I came upon a gang of highly aggressive bikers who were harassing a young woman. I told them to leave her alone, but they wouldn’t listen.

“So, I approached the largest and most heavily tattooed biker. I smacked him on the head, kicked his bike over, ripped out his earring and threw it on the ground.

“Then I told him, ‘Leave her alone now or you’ll answer to me.’”

St. Peter was impressed. “When did this happen?”

“A couple of minutes ago,” he replied sadly.

## WWII Vet *Continued from Page 1*

Thankfully, he managed a daring escape: “I crawled into the bushes, and when they were out of sight, I ran in the opposite direction,” he says. “I got to a farmhouse, and it was becoming daylight.”

Kellerman says he knocked on the door and tried to explain that he



was an American who had escaped, but the residents didn’t speak English.

“They gave me all their French clothes and took my uniform and burned it,” he recalls. They wouldn’t let him stay because they could all be killed if the Germans found them, so he took off on foot and walked along the railroad tracks, Kellerman recalls.

“Then I got brave,” he says of moving from the tracks to the road. Kellerman felt that he was getting “braver and braver” as he passed the Germans and began to stop at houses for food. After finding a bike along the side of the road and getting a flat tire, he visited what he thought was a bicycle store. But to his surprise, it was actually the secret headquarters of the French Resistance.

“It’s a good thing I knew who won the World Series that year because they asked me all kinds of questions to make sure I wasn’t German,” he says. “I convinced them I was who I said I was.” They kept him hidden in the forest, where he stayed until Allied forces took over, he recalls.

“I finished the war with them,” says Kellerman, who was shot in the leg and hand when he fought alongside Allied forces.

Kellerman says he recovered at a hospital in Germany before

**WWII Vet** *Continued on Page 3*



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**WWII Vet** *Continued from Page 2*

returning home from the war, eventually settling down with his wife Sandy in Long Island, New York. Together they raised three children as he opened and ran a series of stores offering sewing machines, vacuum cleaners and typewriters.



He wouldn't return to Normandy until 2018. This time, his family joined him as he received France's Legion of Honor.

"It felt great to be back because they weren't shooting at me," says Kellerman, laughing. "They welcomed me, asked for my autograph and gave me a medal."

But even after that, Kellerman doubted that recognition from his own country would ever come. For years, Kellerman and his daughter, Jean Kellerman-Powers, had been trying to get the U.S. Army to look at his service record. The 2019 short documentary about D-Day, *Sixth of June*, by filmmaker Henry Roosevelt finally helped begin the process to get Kellerman and other veterans the medals they deserved.

Kellerman-Powers says: "If it wasn't for Henry, this never would have happened."

However, Roosevelt says it "took an army" of military leaders "who came together, cut through the bureaucratic tape and didn't just do the right thing. They didn't do the Democrat or Republican thing. More importantly, they did the human thing."

**A Little History Lesson**

During the American Revolutionary War there were two opposing groups - The Whigs and the Tories. A Whig was someone who supported American Independence while a Tory was someone who supported England.

One night a secret Whig dinner meeting was being held at Mr. Smith's farm. In the middle of their roasted chicken dinner, a rooster began crowing loudly and causing a big ruckus out in the yard. The men quickly went outside and found a British loyalist who had been spying on the meeting being chased by Mr. Smith's rooster!

They immediately captured him before he had a chance to report back to his superiors. They tied him up and went back to their dinner. They decided to dedicate that meal to the brave rooster who caught the British spy.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how the dish Chicken-Catch-A-Tory came to be!



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**Break Up**  
**LADY:** (Sobbing her heart out, eyes swollen, nose red) ... “I can’t see you anymore. I am not going to let you hurt me like this again!”  
**TRAINER:** “It was a sit up. You did one sit up.”

**Par for the Course**

Four old men went into the pro shop after playing 18 holes of golf. The pro asked, “Did you guys have a good game today?”

The first old guy said, “Yes, I had three riders today.”

The second old guy said, “I had the most riders ever. I had five.”

The third old guy said, “I had seven riders, the same as last time.”

The last old man said, “I beat my old record. I had 12 riders today.”

After they went into the locker room, another golfer who had heard the old guys talking about their game went to the pro and said, “I’ve been playing golf for a long time and thought I knew all the terminology of the game, but what’s a rider?”

The pro said, “A rider is when you hit the ball far enough to actually get in the golf cart and ride to it.”

**Milestones**



**Dorothy Halsey**  
Nov 11, 1924—98 years  
Fruitland



**Joanne Braden**  
Oct 14, 1937—85 years  
Weiser



**Martha Sifuentes**  
Nov 15, 1947—75 years  
Nyssa



**Mark Greer**  
July 1, 1952—70 years  
Weiser



**Kathy Gray**  
Oct 13, 1952—70 years  
Nyssa



**Jenny Saltos**  
Nov 15, 1952—70 years  
Nyssa

**There are no words in the English language that have all the vowels in alphabetical order, he said facetiously.**



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