

Horrors of War and Darkness Couldn't Steal This Hero's Faith and Humanity

Read Time: 2 Minutes 55 Seconds

Ernest Albert "Andy" Andrews grew up in a small town in Tennessee. He didn't know much excitement outside the mountains where he lived, and he clung to his devout Christian upbringing.

It was his devotion to Christ that would eventually sustain him throughout the horrors of World War II, when he became a hero to many—including the enemy—for his unbridled humanity.

Andrews is only one of the many we celebrate for their wonderful service on this Veteran's Day.

Andrews died in 2016 at the age of 92 in the tiny community of Monreat, North Carolina. But the legend of his compassion as a soldier prompted hundreds to attend his funeral.

"He was an old man living in this little community in the mountains, and about 700 people showed up to his memorial service," Andy's son, Al Andrews, told Fox News Digital. "It was crazy wild."

Andrews' war memoir titled, "A Machine Gunner's War: From Normandy to Victory with the 1st Infantry Division in World War II," was published in summer 2021. It revealed in graphic detail Andrews' experiences as a U.S. Army machine gunner, which Fox News said was "a position with a life expectancy in combat of approximately seven minutes."

Andrews obliterated those expectations, earning four Purple Hearts and four Bronze Stars. He endured several close calls to his life, including "once when his glasses were shot off

his face,” Fox News reported.

But his saga of survival wasn't what Andrews was remembered for. It was his faith and humanity that shone through in a time of great chaos, confusion and heartache. His memoir detailed several stories that showed Andrews' Christlike character, including:

- Andrews was ordered to lob a grenade into a machine gun nest that was “spewing” fire at his company. As he got closer to the enemy dugout, he discovered sobbing children, three German boys no older than 7, pulling a rope to keep the machine gun going. Nazis had apparently ordered children to maintain the position as they retreated. Andrews consoled the boys, offered them chewing gum and assured them the Americans would care for them.
- In yet another incident, Andrews' lieutenant gave him a direct order to gun down 10 Germans who had waved a white flag to surrender. “You can go to ‘expletive,’” Andrews told him. “You can get someone else to do your dirty work for you.” The lieutenant later relented on the order.
- Yet another story of his humanity came when Andrews was in perhaps one of the most heated battles in which he participated. After 30 minutes of silence, he heard a voice say, “May I surrender? Please, may I surrender?,” the bloodied, 17-year-old German soldier said in broken English as he crawled to Andrews, afraid that Andrews would kill him. Andrews told the German he would never murder anyone because he is a Christian. The weary soldier said, “I Christian too.” The two, wounded by each other, hobbled to the nearest aid station.

Al Andrews recalled about his father to Fox News Digital, “I feel like as he talked about it, he was doing something that needed to be done because of the horrors of war. But I don't know if he ever really reconciled it. It was a tension for

him, as I think it probably would be for any person of faith.”

Upon returning from the war, Andy Andrews went on to serve in Christian youth ministry for several decades. He was inspired to do so by the incident with the German children.

In speaking at his father’s memorial service, Al Andrews said, “During the last year of his life, when you asked dad how he was doing, he would always say, ‘Well, I can’t hear, and I can’t see, but God is good.’ And he told us that in the midst of pain and trials, look for God’s goodness. It’s always there.” {eo}

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