

Decorated World War II vet dead at 90; flew two missions on D-day

PROUD OF SERVICE,
PROUDER OF THOSE
HE SERVED WITH

By Jim Warren

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Frank Cassidy of Lexington, a decorated World War II veteran who flew 35 combat missions as a B-17 tail-gunner, has died.

He was 90.

Mr. Cassidy's B-17 flew two bombing missions on D-day, softening up defenses for the June 6, 1944, invasion of Nazi-held France. He always insisted that the soldiers fighting on the ground that day were the true heroes.

"I don't think the American people appreciate what some of those men did," Mr. Cassidy said in a 2009 interview. "Those guys, they deserve all the honors."

Mr. Cassidy received honors of his own for his war service, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and four Oak Leaf Clusters.

After the war, he worked in advertising for Kroger and American Standard. Work took him to other cities, but Mr. Cassidy spent most of his life in business in his native



Sharing his D-day experiences in 2009, Frank Cassidy held a model of a B-17 like the one in which he served as a tail gunner. Cassidy flew 35 combat missions, including two on D-day.

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Lexington. At various times, he was a part owner of Clark Casual Furniture, Lexington Tent and Awning Co. and Bluegrass Magazine.

In later years, Mr. Cassidy became an amateur historian and an active member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. On Veterans Day a few years ago, he arranged a showing of the classic war movie *12 O'Clock High* at the Kentucky Theatre. He also spoke at area schools because he thought it was important for young people to hear about the war from someone who was there.

Mr. Cassidy was born

May 12, 1923, in Lexington, one of six children of Frank and Lula Cassidy.

Anne Cassidy recalled in a eulogy that her father remained upbeat and proud of his family to the end.

"In one of my last visits home," she said, "Dad held my hand and said, 'Isn't life wonderful?'"

Mr. Cassidy died March 20 and was laid to rest at Camp Nelson National Cemetery. He is survived by his wife, Suzanne, four children and seven granddaughters.

Mr. Cassidy was 16 years old, attending Lafayette High School, in 1939 when the

war began in Europe. He and his classmates initially paid little attention, he recalled 50 years later in 1989.

"It didn't have real immediacy ... until after Pearl Harbor," he said. "Then it became our war."

Mr. Cassidy was soon flying combat missions over Europe with the U.S. Eighth Air Force 95th Bomb Group, based in Horham, England.

"You were part of this great, massive undertaking," he said. "You were part of history."

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Frank D. Cassidy, Obit., 28 March 2014. Lexington Herald-Leader



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