



**American Legion Post 178
Millerton NY**

Killed in Action Tribute



TEC4 Robert Liner U.S. Army

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2019 marks the 75th Anniversary of the largest and complex military operations in the history of the world, the D-Day Landings in Normandy France.

In July 1944 the allies were still confined to a small area of the Normandy Coast. However, during the seven weeks following the initial landings the allies had managed to build up a significant amount of combat strength which would soon be unleashed upon the occupying German Army. One of these units was the United States Armies 4th Armored Division, created only a few years before at Camp Drum NY. As part of this soon to be storied division, was a soon to be equally storied unit with an even more storied commander, the 37th Tank Battalion under the command of the LTC Creighton Abrams, the same officer who would lead the US Army in Vietnam from 1968 to 1972, and who would go on to serve as Chief of Staff of the US Army from 1972 until his death in 1974. In 1980 the US Army would name its new Main Battle Tank in his honor, the M1 Abrams. In mid-July 1944 one of those soldiers serving in Company A, of the 37th Tank Battalion landing in France, about to embark upon one of the greatest military operations of all time was a young soldier with ties to both Millerton NY and Sharon CT, CPL Robert Liner.

Robert was born on January 15th 1914 to Charles and Leona Liner in Sharon CT. Roberts paternal grandparents had immigrated from Germany in the 1860's and had settled in Sharon CT not long after and were engaged according to the 1870 census in agricultural work. In 1875 Roberts father Charles was born. He would marry in mother Leona in 1889 and they would welcome their first child named Clifford in 1901. By the time Robert was born in 1914, he would be the seventh child and the fifth son. There would be three more sisters born after Robert with the last sibling born in 1923.

We don't have any information yet on Roberts childhood or his education, but we do know that on May 16, 1941, 6 ½ months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Robert now aged 27 enlisted in to the United States Army. Unfortunately, after this point, his story we can only tell indirectly as his service record was one of those lost in the great fire in 1973 that destroy thousands of records at the National Archives repository in St. Louis.

What we do know is that the 4th Armored Division after training in the states arrived in England in December 1943. For the next 6 months leading up to its arrival in France following the D-Day landings, were filled with very intensive training in preparation for their debut in combat. On July 15th, the day had arrived when they landed in France, and a week later they were actively engaged in combat, assigned to General Patton's Third Army, with the 37th Tank Battalion assigned to Combat Command A.



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For those of you who have seen the 1970 movie Patton, starring George C. Scott, you have an idea of what happens next. On July 25th, 1944, Operation Cobra, the brainchild of Lt. General Omar Bradley, General Patton's immediate superior, achieved the decisive breakthrough of the German lines just south of the Carentan Peninsula. Combat Command A, with the 37th Tank Battalion in the lead, was literally at the tip of the spear in one of the most offensives in the history of armored warfare. Within weeks, the Germany Army west of the Rhine River had fallen apart. By August 25th Paris was liberated. By the beginning of September, they were overrunning the same battlefields where 26 years before a previous generation of Americans had fought the German Army. Then in mid-September the pace of operations was slowed down, as the Allied offensive was literally outrunning its own supply lines. This slow down enabled a much-needed breather for the German Army and as a result their battle lines were reconstituted, and their resistance against the western Allies stiffened.

From mid-September through mid-November, Combat Command A and the 37th Tank Battalion were in the thick of it, facing off during this period with multiple German Panzer Brigades and Divisions, and each time coming out on top. By mid-November Robert was a seasoned Veteran with 4 months of continuous combat experience under his belt.

On 19 November 1944, Combat Command A, with the 37th Tank Battalion once again in the lead, resumed the offensive with the rest of Third Army with the goal of securing the Saar Industrial region of Germany. Operating on the northern flank and in support of the 26th Divisions 104th Infantry, in the vicinity of Rodalbe France, Robert's unit took contact and in the action that followed, Robert was killed in action. He was 30 years old.

Following the war, Robert's remains were repatriated to the United States. Today his remains reside along with his parents and grandparents in Hillside Cemetery in Sharon CT.

Authors Note: The above narrative was presented during the Post 2019 Memorial Day observances in Veterans Park, Millerton NY as part of the Posts annual Killed in Action Tribute.