

HAROLD ANGLE

Member since 1933

Background

Birth Date:

June 27, 1923

Place of Birth:

Chambersburg, PA

Military Service:

WWII (28th Infantry Div.)

Did You Know?

Harold's original instrument was the violin. He started playing the saxophone when his sister decided she no longer wanted to play the instrument *after* their dad had already purchased it. Harold has only ever taken the 10 free lessons that were offered by the man who sold them the saxophone.

Favorite Hymns

Here I Am, Lord

Stand Up, Stand Up For
Jesus

Amazing Grace



At age 98, Harold Angle has accumulated nearly a century's worth of life experience, almost all of it lived in Chambersburg. He has lived through times of want and scarcity, as well as times of abundance. He has endured several cycles of war and peace. And he has also weathered several massive changes within our church, which he has attended since his infancy. He remembers attending when we were called First United Brethren and later as Evangelical United Brethren.

Harold remembers Esther Shartle as being influential in his faith journey at First Church. As superintendent of the children's department, she encouraged Harold to become more involved. He became a counselor at Camp Penn and eventually took on the role of Sunday School superintendent, a position that he held for nearly sixty years. But, of course, his longevity in that position pales in comparison to the almost ninety years he has served FUMC as a musician. He began playing in the Sunday School orchestra at the age of 11 and hasn't stopped since (although his instrument of choice has changed).

Some of Harold's other early faith memories are of attending revivals as a kid, and walking the 'sawdust trail' up to the front of the revival meeting to accept Christ. He also remembers the day of his baptism. It was late September, and he remembers the water being cool at Cowan's Gap where he was baptized just prior to entering the service in WWII.

Harold's military service began when he was drafted into the Army on July 3, 1944. After completing basic training at Camp Walters in Texas and several short stays in Fort Meade in Maryland and Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, Harold boarded a Norwegian troop carrier in New York City on Christmas Eve. He remembers it being a sad moment in his life, listening to carols being played in the harbor while he was stuck on a boat and separated from his family for Christmas.

In the early morning hours of December 26th, his ship set sail for Liverpool, England, accompanied by two destroyers who protected it from German U-boats during the crossing. When the troop carrier arrived in Liverpool, no one was allowed to disembark. That night, under the cover of darkness, they crossed the English Channel and landed in the town of Le Havre. As he stepped off the boat, Harold got his first experience of the war's destruction. Everything had been bombed, with piles of debris everywhere. Bulldozers had cleared a path just wide enough for them to walk from the harbor to the processing center. There, the soldiers were issued their M1 rifles and ammunition and given their assignments. Harold was assigned to the 28th Infantry Division as a replacement soldier.

On January 4, 1945, the day after Harold joined the division, his platoon was sent on a mission to take out a machine gun nest in the Vosges Mountains. Harold was the platoon's 2nd Scout, out in front on the left flank. When he saw a group of soldiers approaching, wearing the same white hoods for camouflage, he thought at first that they were Americans. But when he saw a German helmet peeking out from under one of the men's hoods, Harold motioned the platoon down. They were soon engaged in a firefight in which Harold was shot. The bullet hit his helmet and ricocheted off into his shoulder. The impact made him black out momentarily. When he came to, he remembers being in a prone position, closest to the enemy lines. A German soldier threw a grenade at him, which landed about three feet away. Harold remembers covering his head with his arms and praying the words, "God protect me."

The grenade never went off.

The platoon commander called in mortar fire, and they pursued the Germans, driving them back and securing the machine gun nest that they had been sent out to take. Harold remembers having to brace his rifle against his hip in order to fire it because of his injured shoulder. However, when they returned to camp and a medic had him remove his clothing to have the wound tended, Harold removed an overcoat, an army field jacket, and a sweater. When he took off his undershirt, a bullet simply fell to the ground. It had badly bruised him, but never broken the skin.

In answer to my question about a favorite hymn or song of faith, the ones that Harold named weren't surprising. He loves "Here I Am, Lord" and "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus," two songs that echo the military service of our country's Greatest Generation. Those who stood up for the vulnerable, putting themselves between forces of evil and its victims. Like so many others, Harold answered the call to arms with a selfless "Here I am."

And Harold gave me a final song, "Let the Church March On." It has been one of his favorites to play in the Sunday School orchestra and provides encouragement for us all:

*Let the church march on with relentless zeal, more and more must hatred cease.
'Til the love of God shall become our weal, and the will of God our peace.
Let the church march on! Till the world for Christ is won.
Till His kingdom come and His will be done. Let the church of Christ march on.*