



**Lawrence
Everley**
Navy

Lawrence Everley

Dec 29, 1915 - Sep 26, 1995

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: LTJG

DIVISION: Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Oct 10, 1939 -

BATTLE: Philippines Netherlands East Indies

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

Lawrence Lee Everley was born in 1915 to Hazel Steele and Loyal Leslie Everley. He had two brothers. He joined the Navy in October of 1939 and was assigned serial number 3421465. At the start of the war, he was assigned to the USS Whippoorwill, which was a minesweeper. At the time of the attack at Pearl Harbor, USS Whippoorwill was in Manila Bay in the Philippines. On December 10 Japanese bombers flew overhead and USS Whippoorwill claimed assists in splashing two bombers and sending another one crashing on shore nearby. A Japanese bomb struck USS Peary and the wharf. Under extremely hazardous conditions, the USS Whippoorwill towed the ship out of further danger. On the last day of February in 1942, the USS Whippoorwill assisted the British merchant ship SS City of Manchester, which had been attacked by a Japanese submarine. From mid-May to late August the USS Whippoorwill conducted local patrols and guardship operations in the shipping channels and harbors off the coast of Fremantle, Australia. By November 1942. Everley joined the USS Gold Star, which served as a coastal cargo carrier, steaming between such Australian ports as Brisbane, Sydney, and Fremantle. She thus contributed importantly to strengthening Australia and to checking the Japanese advance in New Guinea. After August 1943, the ship continued her coastal operations in Australia, but also began a series of cargo voyages to New Guinea and the Admiralty Islands. USS Gold Star brought many loads of vital supplies to Milne Bay as the Allies began the push toward the Philippines. By April of 1944, Everley was assigned to USS YMS-481. In a Navy interview conducted in 1945, Everley described the actions of the minesweeper, on which he served as Executive Officer, Ensign D-V(G). They spent three months conducting minesweeping operations near San Francisco and after that they proceeded to the Pacific Theater. Their first action was the attack of Mindoro, Philippines, on December 15, 1944, during which they were attacked several times by enemy aircraft but sustained no significant damage. USS YMS-481 returned to Leyte and prepared for the invasion of Lingayen, where they conducted minesweeping operations three days before the invasion. Everley recounts that they were often under attack, although most of the kamikazes targeted

larger ships. He also describes how the shore bombardment made the crew nervous. The interviewer asked if they were attacked by suicide boats. Everley replied, "We, ourselves, didn't but there was a destroyer that was brought under attack by suicide boats. I think that is the first time that they had found the suicide boat and it was more or less a novelty then. They caught everyone by surprise." Next came the invasion of Palawan, then back to Mindoro, then invasions of Cebu City and Behel, all in the Philippines. The minesweeper then moved to the invasion of Tarakan, Borneo, in the Netherlands East Indies. Tarakan was a smaller island and as such the invasion force was moderately small. As in previous invasions, YMS-481 arrived prior to the battle to sweep for mines. On D-day there was very little opposition. On D-Day plus one, Everley describes the minesweeping operations: "There were to be two different groups of minesweepers, one group sweeping magnetic and the other group sweeping the Oropesa type. The Oropesa minesweepers were in front and they swept up the channel, swept clear up to this point where we later met our Waterloo. They swept within two hundred yards of the beach there. The Japanese let them go right ahead and make their sweep and we came in behind them with our magnetic gear out. There was five ships in a column, we were the third ship. The first two ships passed the point and we had got just abeam or a little aft abeam of the point when the Japanese opened fire with shore batteries. They evidently had us spotted in because only one shot missed, which was the first one, and it was very close, and after that it was just one shot right after the other. In about two or three minutes time the ship was completely out of control and burning, the engine room had a couple hits, the generator room had one hit knocking out all the power which made it impossible to fight the fires." He later continues, "The Australian Air Force arrived in American planes and made several strafing runs on the beach, but it took, well, altogether I think about a half hour before the batteries were silenced or they quit firing, anyway. In the meantime, we were all in the water. We had abandoned ship. They had a hit on our fantail and our depth charges blew up, blew the whole fantail off the ship. We continued floating, burning, drifting away from the point all the time. About fifteen minutes later the main magazine went up. It blew the superstructure, practically gutted the ship but it still floated. We continued burning about a half hour or so after that, and I guess a fuel tank went up just at sundown and the ship sank then." Everley describes how most everyone was off the ship except for the captain and a few others. The force of the explosion blew them off the ship, but "didn't injure any body any more than they were already." He recounts that Japanese soldiers fired at survivors close to the beach, but no one was hit. In the attack, one crew member was killed, five were missing, and eight wounded. Two landing craft from the USS Cofer came and picked up the crew, some not until the next day, and one man, Albert Otto from Texas, who made it to the thick jungle shore, was picked up three days later. After the war, Everley was married by 1946. He and his wife had a son and daughter. Courtesy fold3.com, findagrave.com, newspapers.com