

Happy Veteran's Day! Today, it's only appropriate that I take a moment to honor my grandpa. We celebrated grandpa's 90th birthday in early October. Along with my dad turning 59. I turned 30. And my son, whom I named after my grandpa, turned 1. Add it all up, and it takes three of us to equal one amazing grandpa.



A list of 5 is quite difficult when you respect a man like this. So, here's my best attempt at narrowing it down to the top reasons why I love him.

5. **He's humble.** If you bring up his accomplishments, and they are many, he has a unique way of brushing them off like they were no big deal. As a boy growing up in the depression, he had to raise himself. Fend for himself to get food. He was an incredible baseball player and was trying out in professional leagues when the war came. He then became part of an elite group to fly the Bristol Beaufighter, a British night fighter plane, which only a few Americans flew. You ask him stories, and he says it's no big deal. Yet, read the history, and it was clearly a big deal.

4. **He loves my grandma.** They've been married for 68 years. 68 years! His love for her throughout all of these years, while raising 3 kids has been steadfast. He takes care of her like a man should take care of a woman.

3. **He's a war hero.** Make that, a humble war hero. He doesn't like to talk about it, but served very honorably in the war. There were times when his plan was all shot up, and he landed the crippled bird, got out, and lived to fight another day. 9 years ago, my family went on a trip to Italy, and we revisited a few places he was stationed in the war. It was amazing to hear those stories and try to understand what he and his generation went through.

2. **He's a hard ass (kind of).** Well, at least he tries to be. Growing up, my brothers and I were scared to death of him. He knew how to take care of boys. That's for sure. Over the years, I've realized he's actually the opposite. He likes to act tough on the outside, but inside, he's one of the biggest softies I know. In fact, whenever his family is around now, he can't go a few hours without being sentimental and crying. But, he still tries to play it off like he's tough. I know better. 😊

1. **His faith.** Through 90 years of living, it is the faith of this man that has passed down to his kids, grandkids, and great grandkids. The legacy of faith that will be passed down to our family is in my opinion, his greatest accomplishment. I have named my firstborn son, Emil, after him, and I only pray that he turns out to be as great of a man as his great grandpa.

To all the Veterans out there, Happy Veterans Day. And to my grandpa, thank you, and I love you (and so does baby Emil!).



(More info from my Dad and a pic from the war.)

I seemed to remember that dad (grandpa) told me that he flew out of there. This pic is from the only house that he was able to occupy during the war. He said it was at Catania.



Just to verify that his memory is still right on; here is a few excerpts.

The 415th was indeed at Catania. During World War II it was seized by the Allies during the Sicilian Campaign and used by the United States Army Air Forces as a military airfield. Twelfth Air Force used the airport as a combat airfield, stationing the 340th Bombardment Group, which flew B-25 Mitchells from 27 Aug-19 Nov 1943.

Here is a couple of clips about the WWII mission:

During World War II, the 415th Night Fighter Squadron first flew combat patrols in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations in 1943, then in 1944 and 1945 moved to France and later into Germany in the European Theater as a part of Twelfth Air Force. Returning to the United States after the war, it was assigned to Shaw Field, South Carolina.

An article of the summary about the WWII assault on Sicily:
<http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/72-16/72-16.htm>

Excerpt of glider disaster that dad often has talked about:

The invasion plan called first for British and U.S. Airborne assaults, the former by glider and the latter by parachute. The British began their operation on the evening of July 9 when 147 tow planes, each pulling a loaded glider, took off from Tunisia. The aircraft, nearly all C-47s from the AAF's Troop Carrier Command, carried the British I Airborne Division. Their mission focused on seizing a canal bridge south of the city of Syracuse on Sicily's east coast. Regrettably, strong winds, flak, and poor visibility caused most tow pilots to release their gliders in the wrong areas. **Only twelve came down in the landing zone**; at least forty-seven gliders crashed into the sea, drowning many of the troops aboard. But the British managed to engage the enemy at the canal bridge and captured it the next day.

Whole story: <http://www.around-Sicily.com/Pagina.asp?IdPageStr=wwii>

Interesting article about the WWII 415th squadron being honored by reincarnation with modern stealth fighters: (At an airshow dad and I met a captain in the modern squadron and it was a real kick)

http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/415th_Tactical_Fighter_Squadron

There, now you have a little history to mull over.