

501 W. Sickels St. Johns, MI  
48879  
989.227.4100  
989.227.4199 Fax

## St. Johns High School

Home of the Redwings!

### Dr. Cliff Lumbert

Interviewed by Dani Rewerts



Home
Administration
Attendance
Counseling
Activities
Clinic
Staff
Media Center
Cafeteria
Student Handbook
Map to School
School Calendar
School Profile

Dr. Cliff Lumbert, a veteran of World War Two, volunteered for the service in 1942 at the age of 32, while he was in his second year of dental school at the University of Michigan. It was mandatory that he joined the reserves to stay in school. The war has affected his life in many ways and he feels that he is now more appreciated in the United States for what he has done. "To see what I saw," he said, "People might just realize how lucky we are to live in this country." He lost two cousins on the same Sunday to the war and was also injured himself by a piece of shrapnel. When he joined the reserves he went through basic training at Camp Guber, Oklahoma, then transferred to Camp Grant, Illinois, where he joined up with the 42nd infantry also known as the "Rainbow Division," because there were troops there from every state in the United States. The 42nd infantry was started in World War One and headed by General McArthur and then revived in World War Two. He was overseas in combat from 1942-1946 and came home, but remained in the reserves for another four years. Dr. Lumbert was a medic and cared for the wounded soldiers, he went in as a first lieutenant and came out as a major.

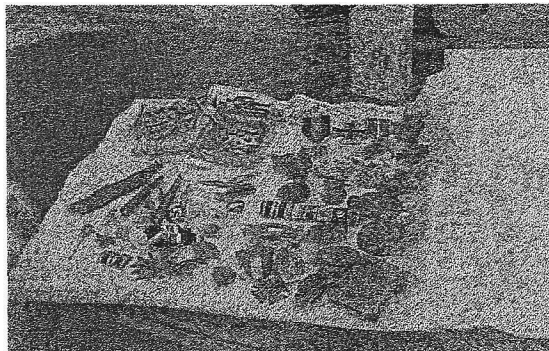
When asked what he thought about the United States having information prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan, he replied, " Yes, I do with all of those articles I've read, I'm sure that all the outposts there, reported planes but they didn't bother, that's my belief." He feels that the United States did more than our share to help all the people involved with the war whether it was civilians or strangers and also cleaning up and getting things organized after the war. I asked him how he thinks he affected the war and he responded that he just did all he could to do his share and there wasn't anything special about it.

His favorite memory about the war was when he heard that the war in Europe was over and his second favorite was when he heard that the war in Japan was over. There were harsh conditions one day, and the next day it could be sunny and hot. It would go from one extreme to the next. Asked about a normal day, he remarked, "There was no such thing as a "normal" day. Every day was different and we never knew what to expect." He did engage in combat and the most famous battle that he was in was when his division liberated Dachau, a large Concentration Camp, during the Holocaust.

He said he felt very sorry for the German people, the soldier's were 'ruthless', and the common German family didn't know what was happening just a few miles away from them. When he captured Dachau, and they brought German civilians over on trucks to see it, many of them broke down in tears; they had no idea what was happening. When Dachau was liberated the people were hard to control. They immediately started raiding homes, stealing from stores; they even took the boots off of dead German soldiers. Although the Jews were joyous, he however did not feel the same way. There were about 29 boxcars lined up there, and every one of them was filled with dead people from the camp. There was one person alive when they checked for any live bodies and this man stood up, saluted them, and fell over. The German soldiers, who would not face up to what they had done put on civilian clothes to make it look like they were first aid men. They didn't want to pay for the murder of thousands of innocent people. A picture that he showed me that stood out the most was of the gas chambers which was the main way of killing the people, and had stains under the doors, which he said was blood. "When you see something like this, you don't like to talk about it, it makes me sick thinking that one group of people can do that to another group of people." He stated.

He was a part of the Red Cross and they were not supposed to be using weapons, but when the general found out that members of the Red Cross were getting shot through the head, he gave them machine guns that they hid on the bottom of their ambulance which they did have to use quite often.

He was in charge of the first aid station with thirteen boys. He still keeps in touch with those people and only four have died out of the original thirteen. They have a reunion coming up in September. He said that he never wants to see another war. "We should keep America well-armed, help underprivileged countries, and band together as one to help stop war." He doesn't want to see his kids in the war. "Enough is Enough!!" His advice to teenagers about life is to stay off drugs, stay out of trouble, stay in school, study, and pick the vocation that you want to do ahead of time and stick with it.



These are mostly of medals from German soldiers.

[go back to WWII Interview homepage](#)