



Warrior At Home

by: Olyvia VanCise

"He's making it through the storm, simply because he's a warrior." The person I consider to be a warrior is Todd Van Cise. I call him Dad. The definition of a warrior is someone who "fights" to overcome something, not only for themselves, but for others they love. For a year now in October, he has been battling the eye disease Scleritis. This is inflammation of the sclera (white part of the eye). In my eyes, he is the perfect example of a true warrior.

One night when we were having dinner together as a family like usual, my dad said he was finished and went to bed. Then... BAM! We woke up at 4 in the morning to my dad bawling. His one eye was as red as a rose, and swollen. We hesitated to go to the emergency room to see if it got better, but it accelerated very quickly. We took him in and a doctor said he had shingles in his eye and that it could eventually blind him. At that moment, observing my dad being in so much pain and my mom having no idea what to do, I became very upset. It truly was a scary situ-

ation.

Two months later came around and he was still undergoing the symptoms of (what we thought) shingle. By now it has spread to his other eye and he is so weak. He has already had multiple check-ups, but there wasn't any new news. My dad went and saw a different doctor and all along he has been treated for the wrong thing, it was then when we found out it was scleritis. He got transferred to the Cleveland Clinic and goes there still to this day. Are things going to get better now that he's there, who knows?

Things haven't gone anywhere for him. My dad became weaker than usual; it hurt to walk and drive. At that moment my mom knew something was wrong, so she drove him to Hamot. When they got there, the doctor did tests and came back and said he had blood clots in his leg. If they broke free, they would travel straight to his heart and cause an even worse situation. Luckily he was at the hospital in case anything happened, but everything was fine. Surprisingly, it's from

here where things started to get better.

He has continued to use all his strength to become healthy again. Taking lots of medication (morning, day and night), driving two hours to his monthly appointments and constantly trying not to get sick. He hasn't stopped fighting and it is resulting in him almost completely healthy. Blood clots were gone and his eyes only flared up every once-in-awhile.

His determination towards his health made my mom, brother and I see life a little differently. Anything can happen in the blink of an eye. Not only did it just affect us, others in our family became more selfless.

They wanted to assist others because you just never know when something tragic is going to happen. My dad is an amazing role model in my life.

Todd Van Cise hasn't let a year long illness knock him down even though scleritis has put its beating on him. My dad has put all his energy into fighting for his loved ones. He is strong and a fighter. He is a warrior.

Heart of a Warrior

by: Gavin Griffin



In the picture on the left, the author, Gavin Griffin, stands with his hero-warrior, Ronald Hopwood. Mr. Hopwood, right, sits at home, holding his memories of his time in Japan during WWII.

My opinion of a warrior is somebody who stands up for what they believe is right and are prepared to fight to keep it that way. A true warrior endures hardships or is ready to do so just to keep their country safe. To me, there are many warriors that protect and defend the United States of America, past and present. But there is a particular Warrior whose story I think is more special than the rest. He was in the military during WWII as a paratrooper in the Pacific Theatre. Among all the others, Ronald Hopwood is, to me, a true warrior.

Mr. Hopwood's "unexciting", as put in his own words, journey started in 1944. WWII was raging, and more and more young men were being drafted daily. Among the young new draftees was Ronald Hopwood, a Pennsylvania boy from around Titusville, PA. He probably didn't expect to have to be a soldier, and probably didn't want to either. But he had to do it anyway and decided to give it his all, and he "stepped up to the plate", so to speak, for his country's freedom. So he shipped off to basic training that he described as "very easy" and that mostly consisted of learning to march and shoot a rifle. Then he set off to paratrooper training where he would learn to be one of the world's toughest and most elite soldiers ever. It was very tough to get through training. That was exactly the truth. Every morning, his company would wake up at the crack of dawn, run 4 miles down, and then run 4 miles back, all before going to the mess hall for breakfast. After breakfast came a long, hard day

of training. With jump training, which readied the men for parachuting into enemy territory, the men would each be put into a jump harness and hoisted up into the air. They stayed there for easily 45 minutes to an hour, hanging from this huge contraption.

After training, Ronald Hopwood, along with his comrades, was preparing to be shipped off to the Pacific theatre to begin the fight against the Japanese. He was now a T/5, or Tech Sergeant, and had made it through both basic and Paratrooper training. He and his company were headed for the Philippines to take over a Japanese held city. When they arrived there, the Japanese had surrendered the town and there was no enemy to battle. While going through the city, Corporal Hopwood stumbled upon a Japanese bayonet that had been dropped and left behind in the haste of the Japanese retreat. He still has that bayonet to this very day. Since the Japanese had surrendered, the American division, Hopwood's Division, had no enemy to fight, and soon began preparing for the overall invasion of the Japanese mainland. They climbed up nets on the sides of battleships, and then back down them and into LCIs, or landing craft, infantry. The date for the invasion was set for August 16, 1945. But, unplanned by American military officials, Japan surrendered the night before, August 15, 1945. Although the invasion of military might had been canceled due to surrender, American forces still took over Japan, making sure that the war was settled once and for all. They were fully armed and ready for battle, in

case the surrender had been a hoax. There was no battle though, but the brave men were at the front of a liberation force, risking their lives.

Among those brave men was Ronald Hopwood. He did his service for his country, making him a true warrior. He had been ready to fight in the Philippines, and now he was ready to fight in the heartland of Japan. When his division came into Yokohama, bringing their ships into Tokyo Bay, they had all mentally prepared themselves for the possibility of having to fight a war. Individually, in their own minds, they had all become warriors. Even if they didn't see combat, they were prepared to do so at all costs. After unboarding in Tokyo Bay, the men plopped up into the back of an Army transport truck. They then patrolled through the city in the back of their troop transport, keeping an eye out for any enemy soldiers that may attack them. Fortunately, there were no enemies in sight. They had all surrendered to the allies. The War was over, after years of fierce hostility and fighting between the U.S. and Japanese.

In my opinion, Tech Sergeant Ronald Hopwood was a true warrior. He was willing to put his life on the line for Freedom and his country, and for that he is a warrior. He got up and endured hardships, stood up for what he believed in and what he knew was right. He was prepared to fight to keep the way of life he knew and loved. He did what had to be done, and made a great sacrifice for our country. And so, for that, he will forever in my mind be a true warrior.

Leanoire Earnest: A True Warrior

by: Audrey Herman

What is a warrior? It can be many different things. But I picture a warrior as a strong, persistent, brave person who never gives up on life. That definition perfectly suits my great-grandma Leanoire. She's a ninety-four-year-old woman who lives by herself in southern Pennsylvania. She's strong and has withstood many dangers and obstacles, such as pneumonia and skin cancer. Yet through all this she reminds kind and thoughtful to everyone around her. Leanoire Earnest is a warrior, through and through.

Skin cancer is a large problem to society. It's the most common kind of cancer, but terrible nonetheless. It configures when the skin is exposed to too much ultraviolet light from the sun, and it usually itches or burns. My grandma had it on the tip of her nose and it was a rough ride. She has battled with it for years and still is battling today. But she still is untroubled about it, and all she wants to do is make

her family happy by baking cookies or mixing snack mix. This proves my grandma Leanoire is a warrior to me and everyone around her.

My great-grandpa Earnest died a long time before I was born, but my grandma was miserable when he had passed away. He was a very nice man, according to my dad, and she was dejected for a long time. But one day, she started to establish a bright side. She dwelled on her family that she still had and how much she loved them. She still recollects things about my great-grandfather every day, but is still caring and loving. She didn't sulk, or wait for death. She just kept her head high and gazed up to the stars, as only a true warrior would do.

My grandma Leanoire just seems to attract misfortune because long before she had skin cancer, pneumonia was her biggest threat. We don't know how she got it, but it was most likely that for weeks, months even, she

was outside 80% of the day. During WWII she was a farmer for those who needed food, even when it was freezing outside, so this is probably where it came from. She was in bed for a very long time, but family visited and kept her going. After what seemed like a lifetime, she was out of her house and feeling great. Only a warrior would be so energized from a life-threatening ordeal.

So as one can see, the definition of a warrior corresponds to Leanoire Earnest perfectly. She's kind to everyone, and even though life hurls things in her way, she eludes them with pride. She's battled skin cancer and pneumonia, and faced the death of her husband. Yet she stays strong like no one else has. She'll do anything to make her family happy, and it's like graciousness is her middle name. A warrior doesn't have to be knight in shining armor. It can be as simple a person like my great-grandma Leanoire, a warrior to all.