The ***LEDENYI*** family









REMEMBERING MY DAD

I wonder "Why did he fight in WWII? In the Hungarian Revolution of 1956?" "For Freedom! For Mankind! For Everyman kind!," would have been my father's response.

It breaks my heart to see images of suffering war victims that could easily be imposed over past pictures of war. And it still goes on and on and on.

My dad, *Joseph Ledényi*, was a very proud and accomplished Air Force pilot but he was not proud of the destruction his bombs caused. He was following orders.

My dad seldom talked about the war, but when he did, he spoke in somber tones in a reflective way. His eyes would cloud over, the pain of remembering very evident.

The Hungarian Air force was a very small one during that time and it was swallowed up by the German Air force. The Hungarian pilots had no other choice but to be a part of the bigger German command.

My dad recalled these military experiences in a bland manner, devoid of emotion. He did what he had to do because he was a pilot and it was his job. He followed orders but within he planned to bomb open fields, with little success. He was part of a bombing squad following orders automatically, with no regard to the destruction caused. His training wouldn't allow it. He loved and lived for flying but viewed the war as evil, as dirty politics, as destructive!

He explained that he endured these grueling bombing runs because of the friendships and camaraderie of his fellow Hungarian pilots. My dad was an even-tempered man who made friends easily, so his small salvation was his Air Force colleagues. They were a very tight group of like-minded men, who loved to fly and wanted to serve their country. They supported each other; they leaned on each other; they mourned their fallen comrades but they never discussed any mission after its conclusion, its success or its failure. He remembered the sadness and weariness of war etched on the tired faces of his fellow pilots, none wanting to fly these missions but each forced to do so as they had to follow given orders.

My dad was never shot down, never wounded, never court-martialed as an enemy pilot. In my eyes, he was my hero; a gentleman, an air force pilot, whose words still ring true today, "War is evil; war is dirty politics; war destroys! But despite that, countless soldiers, men and women, fought for and defended freedom to the free world.

We thank you for your service.

by *Eva Henn*