

Oliver honored as a member of the greatest generation

By Sherri Onorati, Special to The Leader

The June Veteran of the Month honored by the Tipton County Veteran's Council in partnership with the Tipton County Museum is truly a Tipton County treasure and the oldest veteran thus far to be honored.

At the monthly celebration held last Tuesday, Lawrence Oliver, 100 years of age and a World War II Army veteran, was recognized for his faithful and dedicated years of service to the United States of America.

Oliver, the son of William Samuel and Ruby Lee Carroll Oliver was born in Memphis and spent his early years in there and in Ward, Ark. It was in Ward, where he met his future bride, Velma Orene Chancy, whom he married on May 5, 1940.

Oliver was working for the United States Post Office when he was drafted into the U.S. Army on April 8, 1943 at Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. Using the skills he learned while serving with the USPS, Oliver served as a sergeant with the Army's 4th base post office. He was soon sent overseas to New Guinea, the Philippines and occupied Japan for the remainder of the war, and returned home in 1945 where he was honorably discharged.

Oliver returned to the U.S. Postal Service where he worked for the next 25 years, retiring with a total of 30 years of government service in 1970.

After retirement, Oliver enjoyed various pursuits, including volunteering with the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA) for more than 20 years. He is also a longtime supporter of St. Jude, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, Memphis Union Mission, and the Memphis Food Bank.

Oliver and his wife moved to Munford in 2005 and are the parents of two daughters and have five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Oliver's beloved wife, Orene, passed away in 2013.

Nominated by Munford Mayor Dwayne Cole and Tipton County Veteran Council Vice Chairman Wanda Bellows, Oliver stated he was honored by the recognition.

"I'm reminded from time to time, that not too many years ago veterans were not too popular," said the centenarian, dressed in his original WWII Army uniform jacket. "The attitudes were, 'so you're a veteran, so what, get over it.' That seem to be the attitude for a while and it bothered me but then Tom Brokaw came along and wrote that book, *The Greatest Generation* and he turned things around. I thank ole' Tom Brokaw for doing that. I have found that since that book came out that veterans are honored much more now. After Vietnam, we weren't real popular but we were still glad, we did what we did."

Oliver received a certificate of honor in recognition of his service and a museum coffee mug.

The Veteran of the Month program is sponsored by the Tipton County Museum, Veteran Memorial and Nature Center and the Tipton County Veterans Council. Sponsors of the monthly event include Tipton County Veterans Council, Patriot Bank, The Bank of Tipton and Munford Funeral Home. Underwriters include the VFW Post 4840, the Disable American Veterans Auxiliary in Millington, Tim Sloan and the Rev. Norman Crittenden. July's Veteran of the Month will be honored on Tuesday, July 14. At the Tipton County Museum, Veteran Memorial and Nature Center. The Public is invited to attend.