

The Last Veteran

Frank Buckles, believed to be the last surviving US veteran of World War One, died at age 110, February 27, 2011, at his home in Charles Town, WV. Buckles, who survived being a civilian Prisoner of War in the Philippines in World War II, celebrated his 110th birthday on February 1, 2011. He had told others that he lied about his age to join the United States Army at age 16. The Missouri native was among nearly 5 million Americans who served in World War I in 1917 and 1918. He drove an ambulance during the war.

“I knew there’d be only one (survivor) someday. I didn’t think it would be me,” he said.

Perhaps we can all relate to the words of Steve Higginbotham: “While generations have come and gone since the beginning of time, this one has come and gone in my lifetime, and it has caused me to pause and think about the brevity of life. Time moves on. It seems like yesterday that I watched as men from both WWI and WWII marched down the streets in Veterans parades. But apparently, it’s been longer than yesterday.”

Then Higginbotham reminds us of an important fact: “Friends, you better serve the Lord while you can, because sooner than you realize, your time on earth will be done. ‘What is your life? It is but a vapor that appears for a short time and then vanishes away’ (James 4:14).”

“Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life’s busy way; Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart: Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.” – C.T. Studd

Due to the brevity of life and the consequences of choices that we make in this life, Jesus said, “Enter by the NARROW gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Our earthly life – even though some like Frank Buckles live to be 110 – is brief and temporary. Yet, God desires for each of us to live eternally with Him in heaven. He has given His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins to give us this opportunity. “He died for us so that ... we may live together with him” (1 Thess. 5:10). He has promised life – eternal life – to those who will submit their lives to Him.

God will grant ETERNAL LIFE to those who: place their faith and trust in Jesus (Acts 16:30-31), turn from their sins in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

The passing of the last American veteran of WWI reminds us that our earthly lives are fragile and short. Yet, God offers ETERNAL LIFE to those who will accept salvation in Christ. Won’t YOU accept?

(Adapted) David A. Sargent, Minister
Church of Christ at Creekwood, Mobile, Alabama