

The Geary Men Head to Battle

by Jackie Layne Partin (2022)

"There will be no deferments in our family," 17-year-old Max Geary of Tracy City said yesterday as he put in his application for aviation V-5 training with the navy. Geary is the fifth son of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Geary to enter the service."

"Max and his brother, Carl, have been carrying on the business for their father, who has a bad leg and is unable to stand for a long time. Max ran the filling station and Carl the grocery next door. Under the circumstances one of them, or both might receive short deferments, but they don't want it that way. Carl has been sworn into the navy and leaves within the next few weeks."



"We'll make out some way. That is one thing sure. I know we will get along," the father says with pride. He and Mrs. Geary plan to run the business themselves, using such help as they can get."

"The Geary's other three sons who are already in the service are Billy, who just received his captaincy in the marine corps at Quantico, Va., and has had 18 months' service in the South Pacific; Ned, who is with the ground crew of the air forces in Florida, and Earl, who is with the army stationed in Idaho." (*Chattanooga Daily Times*, 29 Feb. 1944)

William Robert Geary, Sr. and his wife Lillie Mae (Myers) Geary had two daughters and five sons.

This little story is a bit of Grundy County's military history with the sons being the men of action. The sons were William Robert "Billy", Jr., Carl Thomas, Ned Clifford, Sr, Raymond Earl, Sr., and Max Douglas, Sr. Mr. Geary saw his sons scattered across the globe during WWII. He was a confident man, and, no doubt, felt his sons would get the job done, and they did.

They all survived the dangers thrust upon them and eventually made it back home to Tracy City. However, Carl Thomas Geary met with some injuries while fighting in the Pacific. We read in the **May 1, 1945** issue of the *Chattanooga Daily Times*, "Memphis,

April 30, Pfc. Carl Thomas Geary, USMC, of Tracy City, Tenn., has been admitted to the U. S. Naval Hospital here for treatment of injuries received **Dec. 28, 1944**, on Saipan, according to an announcement by Capt. H. R. Boone, medical officer in command. Geary, whose wife, Mrs. Nellie D. Geary, resides in Palmer, Tenn., attended Grundy County High School and was employed in a grocery store prior to enlisting in the marine corps, **March 15, 1944**. He has three brothers also in the armed services, Capt. Bill Geary, U. S. Marine Corps; Pfc. Ned Geary and Pfc. Earl Geary, both in the U. S. Army... While overseas Geary served on Saipan, Johnson Islands, Marshall Islands and at Pearl Harbor."

Besides his stop-over battles along the Pacific to Japan, what did Carl go through in Saipan? "The Battle of Saipan was a battle of the Pacific campaign of World War II, fought on the island of Saipan in the Mariana Islands from **15 June to 9 July 1944** as part of Operation Forager. It has been referred to as the "Pacific D-Day" with the invasion fleet departing Pearl Harbor on **5 June 1944**, the day before Operation Overlord in Europe was launched, and launching nine days after. The U.S. 2nd Marine Division, 4th Marine Division, and the Army's 27th Infantry Division, commanded by Lieutenant General Holland Smith, defeated the 43rd Infantry Division of the Imperial Japanese Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Saito. The loss of Saipan, with the deaths of at least 29,000 troops and heavy civilian casualties, precipitated the resignation of Prime Minister of Japan Hideki Tōjō and left the Japanese archipelago within the range of United States Army Air Forces B-29 bombers. [Wikipedia](#)"

I am unable to find exactly what ship, company, or commander that Carl was on, serving with or serving under, but I have found several roster records with his name. The three places mentioned in papers that I found were Seattle, Washington, Memphis, Tennessee, and San Diego, California. Carl and his four brothers bring to mind the five Sullivan brothers who unfortunately served together in the Pacific, all on the same ship, all lost, bringing deep pain to their parents' hearts. Thankfully, the five Geary brothers chose different branches and areas to serve; that must have been comforting to Mr. W. R. and Lillie Geary as they managed the family business with their thoughts on their sons.

Thanks to Michael Geary for this wonderful photo of the five returned U. S. military, Geary men. He writes, "This is all of my uncles and my aunt. Oldest to young, I think. Aunt Hazel, Uncle Billy, Uncle Carl, Uncle Ned, Uncle Earl, and my daddy Max. Next to him is the mother of this clan Lillie Myers Geary. Not pictured Aunt Margurete (deceased before picture) and my grandfather W. R. Geary (William Robert)."

