

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

April 27, 2020



A metal plated New Testament; a common possession of soldiers in WWII & Korea

There is Only One Book That Can Save Your Life

“The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life... Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” John 6:63, 68

Every time I visited my grandparent’s house in Patterson, I headed straight for the tin box where grandma kept her photos. Though I had looked at the pictures many times before, that was always the first thing I did when I arrived.

As a young boy, I lived post-WWII and during the Korean War. Several of my relatives served in various branches of the military, including my father and a few uncles, and many of the photos in the tin box were prints of those men. Besides the photos of my father, in uniform, there were some that were truly stare-worthy.

There was the photo of my uncle Frank, complete with sidearm, who served as an MP in Italy during WWII. He was standing next to his motorcycle. There was also a photo of a young, handsome soldier who, I learned, had later perished in the war, shot several times by a machine gun (I remember someone telling me he was shot nine times). There was also a photo of soldier in uniform, laying in a casket. At that point in my life, I had never even been to a funeral and death was a mystery, so I could not take my eyes off of that picture.

The photos were really interesting, but there was non-photo in the box that trumped them all. It was a little New

Testament with a brass cover that belonged to one my grandmother’s nephews who served in WWII. This was a fairly common gift from a loved one to a soldier, sailor or marine going off to war. It was called a “Heart Shield Bible.” The Bible was meant to be placed in your uniform pocket over your heart, to protect it. There was no battle armor or Kevlar vests in those days.

The Bible in the tin box was similar to the one in the picture above, but with a significant difference — *there was a bullet hole in the middle of it.* The experience of holding that Bible is seared in my memory although the back story is vague. As you probably know, if you have or have had any relatives in war, most men do not want to talk about their war experience. We learned after he died that my dad had been given 3 bronze stars in a little over a year’s combat; he never mentioned that.

All I remember about the story of the Bible is that my grandmother told me that her nephew was seriously wounded, but the little Bible saved his life. The moral of this story couldn’t be simpler: the brass cover kept the nephew’s body safe, but it’s what’s inside that safeguards our souls.