



# Lawrence McCauley

## SOLDIER DETAILS

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**DIVISION:** Army, 65th Armored Field Artillery Battalion

**THEATER OF OPERATION:** European

**BATTLE:** D-Day, Hurtgen Forest, Battle of the Bulge

**MILITARY HONORS:** French Legion of Honor

**HONORED BY:** The Eisenhower Foundation

## BIOGRAPHY

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McCauley tried to join the Marines in Jan. 1942 but his eyeglasses prevented his enrollment. Months later the Army drafted him. He was trained to drive trucks armed with .50-caliber machine guns halftracks and landing craft - just in case. He prepared for D-Day in England and became fast friend with Otto Lutz - a tall Chicagoan. On D-Day McCauley recalled, he and Otto were standing together on a landing craft as it approached Omaha Beach. The door dropped open and a bullet hit Otto in the forehead. McCauley remembers looking back and seeing his friend's face sink beneath the water. But there was no stopping, orders were: Don't stop, because, you're better off as a moving target. McCauley's unit, the 65th, fought their way off the beach that day and climbed the bluffs. McCauley remembers the feeling as he reached the top: "Best grass I've ever seen." McCauley was involved in the fighting through France and Belgium, including the Battle of Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge. On April 11, 1945, McCauley was among the first to reach Buchenwald, a Nazi concentration camp located atop Ettersberg hill about five miles northwest of Weimar in east-central Germany. They liberated 21,000 emaciated inmates. "They were packed in like sardines," McCauley said. Later, McCauley's unit stopped a train, opened it up and found young Jewish girls inside. They directed them to safety behind American lines. In 2019, McCauley attended the 75th anniversary of D-Day at the World War II Museum in New Orleans. He met a Holocaust survivor who said she remembers being freed from a train by American troops. McCauley and the survivor - held hands for over an hour. "Courtesy of The Columbus Dispatch."