

Leslie Hodges Finley Biography

Pre-WSC Experience

Leslie Hodges Finley, Jr. was born on September 12, 1919 in Nelson, Nebraska to Leslie Crosby Finley and Viola (Dot) Hodges Finley.¹ Leslie Finley, Sr. and Dot divorced shortly after Leslie, Jr.'s birth, and she married Karl K. Barnard on July 4, 1926.² Finley spent much of his childhood living in Nelson with his grandfather, William Hodges, a farmer, while his mother lived in Colorado with her new husband.³ Dot and Karl Barnard eventually relocated to Spokane, Washington, where Finley joined them.⁴ Finley's half-brother, James Kimball Barnard, was born in 1928.⁵

Finley attended Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane, Washington, graduating in 1937.⁶

¹ "Leslie Hodges Finley," *Ancestry.com*, https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/155339452/person/242050761724/facts?_phsrc=ixh884&_phstart=successSource (Accessed July 28, 2019).

² "Viola D. Hodges," *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/155339452/person/242050761431/facts> (Accessed July 28, 2019).

³ "1930 United States Federal Census for Leslie Finley," *Ancestry.com*, https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/6224/4610721_00399/107541838?backurl=https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/155339452/person/242050761724/facts/citation/782069224302/edit/record (Accessed July 28, 2019).

⁴ "1940 United States Feder Census for Leslie Finley," *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2442/m-t0627-04387-00028/66203572?backurl=https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/155339452/person/242050761724/facts/citation/782069223772/edit/record> Accessed July 28, 2019).

⁵ "Leslie Hodges Finley," *Ancestry.com*, https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/155339452/person/242050761724/facts?_phsrc=ixh884&_phstart=successSource (Accessed July 28, 2019).

⁶ C. James Quann, *WSU Military Veterans: Heroes and Legends* (Spokane, Washington: Tornado Creek Publications, 2005), 179.

WSC Experience

Finley attended Washington State College (WSC) during the 1937 to 1938 academic year as a Pharmacy major.⁷ He also attended Gonzaga University briefly. After leaving college, Finley moved to Los Angeles where he became a partner in a statistics business with two other people.⁸

Wartime Service and Death

Finley enlisted in the United States Army, Infantry, on February 21, 1941 at Fort MacArthur, San Pedro, California.⁹ He was assigned to the 31st Infantry Regiment (Philippine Division) as a Private, a regiment formed on August 13, 1916 at Fort William McKinley in Manila, The Philippines.¹⁰ Finley was sent to Manila in April, 1941.¹¹ On December 8, 1941, when Japanese planes attacked Clark and Iba Fields, destroying much of the U.S.'s airpower, the Philippine Division was held in reserve around Manila and the Bataan Peninsula to support beach defense forces and prepare for attacks on Bataan and Corregidor Island. The unit covered a withdrawal of American forces to Bataan and Corregidor on December 22, and due to the rapid retreat, many units had to abandon necessary supplies and heavy weapons.¹²

⁷ Quann, *WSU Military Veterans*, 179.

⁸ "1940 United States Federal Census for Leslie Finley,"

⁹ "Leslie H Finley in the U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946," *Ancestry.com*, https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=8939&h=5005910&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=ixh890&_phstart=successSource (Accessed July 28, 2019).

¹⁰ Patrick Feng, "The 31st Infantry Regiment," *armyhistory.org*, <https://armyhistory.org/31st-infantry-regiment/> (Accessed July 28, 2019).

¹¹ Letter from Mrs. K.K. Barnard to Mrs. T.S. Meade, copy of newspaper clipping, Box 1, Folder 6, Washington State University Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) <http://libraries.wsu.edu/masc>.

¹² *Ibid.*

General Douglas MacArthur ordered five thousand men, include the 31st, to provide a delaying action against the Japanese a few miles south of the Layac bridge on January 6, 1942.¹³ The 31st suffered heavy casualties by the time they rejoined the main defensive line at Abucay on January 9; however, they were able to help other units defending Bataan halt the Japanese advance and force them to await reinforcements for several weeks.¹⁴ MacArthur left Corregidor for Australia via submarine on March 12, 1942, at the order of President Franklin Roosevelt. After a sustained aerial and artillery bombardment, the Japanese attack on Bataan began in earnest on April 3, 1942.¹⁵ By that time fifty percent of the 31st Infantry and the rest of the defenders were sick and malnourished due to the dwindling of food and medical supplies.¹⁶ Bataan fell, and the Japanese set their sights on Corregidor.

While troops on Corregidor were in better health than their peers on Bataan, they were still vulnerable after having lived through the effects of a prolonged siege. The Japanese began their assault on Corregidor on May 1, 1942, and by June 9, almost all American and Filipino forces had surrendered.¹⁷ Some units had at first refused to surrender and some individuals escaped to fight as guerrillas. Finley, by now a Corporal, was taken prisoner in May 1942. He was originally listed as missing in action, but later confirmed to have been a prisoner at the Cabanatuan prison of war camp in the Philippines.¹⁸

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵US Army Divisions: Philippine Division,” *armydivs.com*, <https://www.armydivs.com/philippine-division> (Accessed August 9, 2019).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Powwow*, September 1945, WSU 25, WSU Publications: Alumni Office <http://libraries.wsu.edu/masc/finders/wsupublist.htm> at Washington State University Libraries’ Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) <http://libraries.wsu.edu/masc>.

The prison camp at Cabanatuan was divided into three camps, with Camp #1 containing the largest group of prisoners.¹⁹ In June 1942, a prison transfer was made where prisoners from Camp O'Donnell, many of who had survived the Bataan Death March and were seriously ill, were sent to Cabanatuan. The poor health of the transferred prisoners ended up causing the death rate in Camp #1 to soar; by the end of 1942, 2,642 men died, compared to sixty-nine in Camp #3.²⁰ Corporal Leslie Hodges Finley died on July 26, 1942 due to malaria.²¹

Postwar Legacy

Finley is memorialized at Tablets of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery, Manila, Philippines. He posthumously received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star.²²

¹⁹ "Historical Report: U.S. Casualties and Burials at Cabanatuan POW Camp #1," *Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency*, https://www.dpaa.mil/Portals/85/Documents/Reports/U.S.Casualties_Burials_Cabanatuan_POWCamp1.pdf?ver=2017-05-08-162357-013 (Accessed July 30, 2019).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Letter from Mrs. K.K. Barnard to Mrs. T.S. Meade, copy of newspaper clipping, Box 1, Folder 6, Washington State University Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) <http://libraries.wsu.edu/masc>.

"Leslie H Finley in the U.S. WWII Military Personnel Missing In Action or Lost At Sea, 1941-1946," *Ancestry.com*, https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=1199&h=43959&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=ixh893&_phstart=successSource (Accessed August 1, 2019).

²² "Lesley H Finley," *Honorstates.org*, <https://www.honorstates.org/index.php?id=122173> (Accessed August 1, 2019).