

PER TUA
INFORMAZIONE
(FOR YOUR INFORMATION)

G.I. JOE - THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE
A SALUTE TO I.A.C.C MEMBER
JOSEPH ALLEGRETTI

By JOE SANO



Joseph Allegretti is the oldest member of the I.A.C.C. As an 18-year-old 1943 graduate of CBA entering military service, Joe did not know what to expect as a soldier. He knows today as a combat infantryman and twice Purple Heart decorated veteran. He pauses and often questions the movies and TV shows that glorify combat. This was not his experience.

The very thought of aiming a gun at a fellow human to wound or kill him haunts him to this day. Yet, he was a combat infantryman, and that was what he was trained to do, and he did his duty.

His American detachment, the 104th Infantry Division, the first trained for nighttime fighting, was folded into the Canadian First Army offensive which was charged with pushing into Northern Germany from the Netherlands and securing as much territory as possible. These routes would provide the needed supply lifelines to hasten the Allied advance into Germany and end the Second World War.

In the darkness of battle, some combat soldiers were optimists - I will be just fine; some were fatalists - I will be dead soon; some were religious - God will protect me, but all were afraid.

Joe recalls the author and veteran James Jones quote, "In order to perform his duties effectively, the fighting man must learn to live with fear and go ahead in spite of it. There were damn few fearless men on the battlefield."

The sounds and smells of combat as his squad inched through the Netherlands would never be erased. Allied bombing led the way. Their march through the flooded Netherlands was one of mud, rain, filth, cold, and the ever-present thirty-five pounds pack on your back. The weather was joined by steadfast German forces knowing full well that the Allies were pushing into Germany.

The machine gun nests hidden in haystacks covered in netting so that grenades would bounce off; the constant artillery and mortar attacks lighting up the nighttime sky; the split second you had to jump for cover; the canals offering refuge if you were not killed jumping into one that was mined or boobytrapped- remain as memories of years past but never forgotten.

Around Thanksgiving 1944, the shelling and the house-to-house fighting became the norm as the Allied troops forged ahead. Death and destruction were everywhere as the Allied forces struggled onward.

On November 28th, the order was given to seize and control the bridge over the Inden river. For many, this would be their last battle. The shelling was constant. The machine gun fire was never-ending, and the city had to be cleared from house to house. Grenades were being thrown like baseballs. The wounded's cry of "medic... medic..." filled the air. This was the life of a World War II combat infantry soldier.

Joe trusted his M1 Garand rifle, 8-bullet clip, and the ten clips on his ammo belt. He trusted his squad. He was their leader and buddy. The fighting was ferocious. His squad fought over and over again for the same gutted buildings.

The battle was unending. On December 1st, his men were pinned down by a German machine gun nestled in a building atop a hill. Joe and his lieutenant moved forward to eliminate the attackers. Three Germans suddenly ran from the building, and a firefight began. The three German soldiers threw grenades which hit and injured Joe and his lieutenant. As Joe and the lieutenant fell to the ground, wounded from the shrapnel, they fired again at the three German soldiers, this time mortally wounding them all. Joe was evacuated and operated on at a field hospital in Germany and eventually airlifted to Birmingham, England to recuperate. In addition to his two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Medal, among others, Joe was recently awarded the French Legion of Honor medal (Knight) for his contribution to the liberation of France during WWII.

After recuperating from his injuries, Joe returned to the States and was discharged in January 1946. He went to Siena College and graduated with a degree in accounting. Joe married Janet Kajano, his loving companion, for 71 1/2 years, until Janet's passing in 2021. They have four children, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Joe retired from the NYS Thruway Authority in 1986 as the Director of the Bureau of Accounting with 35 years of federal and state employment.



Joe's daughter, Patty, Joe, and his wife, Janet.

Now in his 90s, Joe can share, "When called to heaven, I will tell... another combat veteran reporting for duty, sir... I've served my time in hell!"

So, this Veterans' Day, let us thank and pay tribute to Joe and all the veterans who have honorably served our country. □