

Rensselaer County

2006 Honor A Veteran Ceremony's



Date of Ceremony

Name of Deceased Veteran

January 9, 2006

George Quamo

February 13, 2006

Francis Floyd Cabana

March 13, 2006

George Kewley

April 10, 2006

Thomas B. Reiter, Sr.

May 8, 2006

Donald L. Dunham

June 12, 2006

George T. Plante

July 10, 2006

Joseph M. Muscatello

August 14, 2006

Julian Richard Mason

September 11, 2006

Alfred J. Meyers

October 10, 2006

William J. Ryan, Jr.

November 13, 2006

Clyde S. Ray

December 11, 2006

John C. Nolan

George Quamo

Born in Lynn, Massachusetts on the 20th day of June in 1940, George Quamo was one of six children born to Alexander and Kaliroi Quamo. His siblings included a brother James and four sisters, Yilka, Tefta, now deceased, Andronika, and Marietta.

Attending grammar and junior high in Massachusetts, George and his family would move to New York State in 1953 where they would take up residence at 25 Orient Avenue in Averill Park.

George, a gifted athlete, would before long be distinguishing himself on the basketball court as well as the baseball and football fields at Averill Parks Central Schools, serving as both the quarterback and captain of the Varsity Football Team.

Much more than just a stand out athlete George would find time to serve as President of both his freshman and junior classes as well.

Immediately upon graduating high school in June of 1958 George took advantage of the summer months to get his affairs in order enlisting in the United States Army in the early fall of that same year. George attended basic training at Ft. Benning, Georgia, where he distinguished himself to the point where a short time later in December of 1959 he actually was honorably discharged for the purpose of accepting an appointment to Officer Training School.

Upon completion of that training now Lt. Quamo was assigned to Ft. Riley, Kansas where he served as executive officer to the 1st Infantry Division.

For his service at Ft. Riley 1st Lt. Quamo was singled out by the commanding general for “his dedicated service, high standard of leadership, and devotion to duty.”

Shortly after his time at Ft. Riley, now Capt. George Quamo joined an elite group that was being quietly put together at the very top of our country’s leadership. The Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group, known as MACV/SOG was formed as a result of President Kennedy’s 1961 order which made official U.S. backing of the South Vietnamese government in it’s war against Vietcong guerillas.

In preparation for these duties George had attended Language Schools at both the Presidio in California as well as the University of Maryland, subsequently becoming fluent in Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, and a number of the Montgarde Tribal Dialects. This in addition to George's airborne, ranger, and Green Beret training.

Keep in mind that we're speaking of almost 45 years ago, and special forces, although today's are certainly worthy of their rarified reputations, in those days were truly unique, and as the Green Beret "Hymn," sung by Green Beret Sergeant Barry Sadler stated, for every 1000 men tested, only three would be accepted for Green Beret training, and of those three usually two would actually become Green Berets.

One of about 2000 specialists recruited from all branches of the Armed Forces, including Navy Seals, as well as Air Force Commandos and of course George and his fellow Green Berets, it is from these original "Special Forces" that today's various elite units take their name.

Many of the exploits of these units will never be known, but it has become common knowledge that it was a direct result of their covert operations coupled with the bombing of North Viet Nam that provided the catalyst to get the North to the peace negotiating tables in Paris.

Promoted to major in October of 1967 at the age 27, Major Quamo became the youngest of the MACV/SOG group to hold that rank.

Tales of Major Quamo's actions in combat are the stuff of legend and his commendations will fill a page of their own, many of them such as the Silver and Bronze Stars awarded on the recommendation of the President of the United States himself.

It's ironic that perhaps his most heroic tale went almost totally unrecognized by any official instrument, most likely because it involved the failure to "heed the advice" of a direct superior. While stationed at Khe Sanh George heard accounts of a Special Forces unit about to be overrun by a North Vietnamese Tank Division at Lang Vei, located some 10 miles from Khe Sanh. When he asked permission to lead a rescue attempt Major Quamo was denied by his superiors who feared an even greater loss of American lives if any rescue attempt was made.

Hastily pulling together about a dozen Special Forces volunteers Major Quamo led a reinforcing mission to Lang Vei, resulting in the saving of 14

American Special Forces Troops. The troops whose lives were saved were airlifted out by Marine Helicopters and by all accounts the last man to leave on the last chopper out was Major George Quamo.

As I mentioned earlier the Army “brass” was hesitant to recognize a rescue made as the result of disobeying a direct order, especially when the soldier in question had already been awarded two silver stars and one bronze star as a result of bravery on previous missions, but a short time later after Major Quamo had been declared missing in action and presumed killed in action he was indeed awarded posthumously a Distinguished Service Cross, citing that “in light of his being the last to leave the LZ, or landing zone, his intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle and his extraordinary courage are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army.”

Less than a month and a half later, on April 14th, 1968 Quamo disappeared in an aircraft rumored to be delivering classified documents to the U.S. Command at the American Air Base located at Danang. Major Quamo’s disappearance triggered a major search , including one at sea, given Danangs coastal location, but no trace of the plane was ever found until over 6 years later when some Vietnamese wood cutters stumbled upon the wreckage of a small aircraft containing among others the remains of Major George Quamo.

Flown back to the U.S. the Major’s remains were interned at Arlington National Cemetery, with a nation struggling to heal the wounds of Viet Nam failing to provide even the scantiest of military honors, although the few family, friends, and soldiers in attendance knew they were attending the service of a very special soldier, a true American Hero.

Locally, many tried to do better, as Major Quamo has subsequently been honored by officiating bodies at the state, county, and local levels.

Just over a year ago we here in Rensselaer County named the Sheriffs Sand Lake Sub-Station in honor of Major Quamo and I believe last years Sand Lake Memorial Day Parade was also dedicated to the memory of Major Quamo.

As mentioned the Major’s honors, awards, and citations could themselves be the subject of a mornings narrative but here goes nothing!

Distinguished	Service	Cross	(Posthumously)
Silver	(First	Oak	Leaf
Star	Legion	of	Cluster)
Bronze	Star	w/V	(First
		Oak	Leaf
			Cluster)

Army	Commendation Purple Army Presidential Presidential National Armed	Service Nam Nam Combat	Air Medal (First Heart Good Unit Defense Forces Medal Campaign Parachutist Pathfinder Ranger	Medal Unit Defense Forces Medal Campaign Parachutist Pathfinder Ranger	(First Heart Good Unit Defense Forces Medal Campaign Parachutist Pathfinder Ranger	Oak Leaf Cluster Conduct Unit Citation Service Expeditionary w/ 3 Medal Infantry	Leaf Cluster Conduct Unit Citation Service Expeditionary w/ 3 Medal Infantry	(Posthumously) Medal Emblem Navy Medal Medal Stars Device Badge Badge Badge Tab	Medal Cluster Medal Emblem Navy Medal Medal Stars Device Badge Badge Badge Tab
Expert Badge w/ automatic rifle, submachine gun, and carbine bars Sharpshooters Republic of Viet Nam Republic of Viet Nam N.Y.S.	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit	Unit Unit Unit Unit Unit
N.Y.S. Conspicuous Service Star									

By the way, believe it or not this list is thought to be incomplete!!

Much has been said and written about Major George Quamo but I think a few quotes from an article written by Tom Haggerty which appeared in the Albany Times Union speaks volumns about not just George Quamo the soldier , but indeed George Quamo the man.

In the article, which would also eventually appear in a Marines Magazine known as “Khe Sanh” one Master Sergeant Charles “Skip” Minnicks is quoted as being “madder than hell” when Quamo was put in charge of a reconnaissance team in the fall of 1967. Minnicks was a four tour highly decorated “Special Ops” veteran himself and at 38 years old the units oldest team leader.

“I was madder than hell when he took over and made no bones about it,” said Minnick. “This was a fresh faced captain who looked like a kid,” remembered Minnick.

Neither said a word about it until one day when they were both in the jungle somewhere and Quamo pulled Minnick aside. “We’re both in this for the

same reason. We're both fighting the same enemy. I don't want to fight you, too. We have to work as a team," said Quamo.

From that initial resentment grew something akin to hero worship and Minnick ended the article by saying, "I'll tell you something, I grew to love that man. I would have crawled up inside the barrel of an enemy cannon for him. I mean that. He was one hell of an officer. I can't say enough about him. He was one tough guy."

Distinguished veterans, fellow elected officials, guests, and of course friends and family of Major Quamo. This morning we memorialize a man who truly fits the mold of the unsung hero. An extraordinary warrior who by chance made his mark in a war that many couldn't forget quick enough.

I didn't have the honor of knowing Major Quamo but something tells me that he didn't know nor did he care to know much about the politics behind the conflict in Southeast Asia. What he did know was that his country needed him to serve and sacrifice, and serve and sacrifice he did.

We can never repay the debt which such sacrifice incurs, but we can do our utmost to make sure that the courage and love of country that men like Major Quamo represent is often remembered and passed along to future generations.

Did the actions of George Quamo and many like him change the geo-politics of the region? I don't know the answer to that.

What I do know is that if a nation or anyone looking to do this great nation of ours harm takes the time to research the task they're contemplating, it is the tales, legends, and records of men like Major George Quamo that gives these "despots" pause.

So even now, some 38 years after his plane disappeared over the jungles of Viet Nam, it is the reputation of the American fighting man, proven by the actions of men like Major George Quamo, who even today teach our enemies to tread cautiously. Because if you mess with America, there's a good chance you'll end up messing with folks like Major George Quamo, and trust me, that thought alone keeps many an enemy at bay!

Francis Floyd Cabana

Francis Floyd Cabana was born in East Hampton, Massachusetts on the first day of February in 1926 to parents Harvey and Emma Valley Cabana. He would be raised in central Massachusetts along with his sister Loretta and two brothers Lawrence and Norman.

Attending school in East Hampton, Francis, upon graduating from high school would go on to study for a time at the Smith Vocational School in Northampton, Mass.

Inducted into the United States Army on April 14th of 1944 at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts, Francis would serve as a Rifleman in the 475th Infantry Regiment.

Eighteen year old Francis and the rest of his 475th Infantry contingent would join the WW II “fray” in the fall of 1944. Activated in India in August of ‘44, the 475th, made up primarily of personnel from the former 5307th Composite Unit, was given the mission of clearing the way through India and Northern Burma to allow the allies to establish a supply route to China, where the Japanese presence was still that of a powerful and very much intact ground force.

Assigned to the Northern Combat Area Command, also known as the MARS Task Force, Francis and his comrades would be fighting throughout India, Burma, and China in various actions which when the history of WW II was written would come to be known as the India Burma, Chinese Offensive, Central Burma, and Burma Campaigns.

Leaving Camp Landis in India on November 15th, 1944, Francis and the men of the 475th were under orders to assist the Chinese 22nd Division near the Si-U District, eventually relieving the Chinese at an area called Mo-hlang on December the 6th.

Immediately launching a counter offensive against the Japanese just three days later the allies were able to restore their position at an area in Burma known as Tonk-wa. A few days later the 475th were left alarmingly short-handed when their entire 1st Battalion was ordered to the Shwengu vicinity to help beat back strong Japanese Counter attacks.

The loss of almost 1000 men could have been disastrous but thankfully Rifleman Cabana and the 475th made contact with the British 36th Division at

Katha and once sufficiently reinforced continued to march towards Mong Wi where they engaged the enemy on January 8th, 1945.

They would continue to fight on the move, including one especially ferocious battle in early February known as the Battle for Loi-kang Ridge. Entering China in April the 475th would be inactivated there in July as the ground war had now been turned over to a combination of American and Chinese divisions known as the Alpha Force.

Honorably discharged on April 15th, 1946 Francis was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Campaign ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, and the WW II Victory Medal.

Returning home to Massachusetts Francis completed vocational school in Boston and went on to graduate from Hillyard College in Connecticut, which today is known as the University of Hartford.

Upon his discharge from the U.S. Army, Francis was required to serve for a number of years as an inactive reservist, and as such was available at any time for active duty, and thanks to the North Koreans and his former allies, the Chinese, that's exactly what occurred on October 20th, 1950, when Francis was called back to serve in the Korean War as a member of the 23rd Infantry Regiment.

Although much shorter, his service lasting only 13 months, Francis's second hitch was destined to prove more eventful, with Francis taking part in two of the more brutal Korean Battles, known as the May Massacre and the Battle for Heartbreak Ridge.

Wounded by a piece of shrapnel in his back at the May Massacre, Francis was back in action some five months later when he would be one of seventeen men to survive the Battle for Heartbreak Ridge, originally involving 200 U.S. Soldiers.

Discharged for the second time on December the 4th, 1951, a grateful nation awarded Francis the Purple Heart, a Distinguished Unit Citation, the Korean Service Medal, and the Bronze Star for his service in Korea.

Returning home to Massachusetts Francis relocated to Springfield and shortly there after went on a blind date in North Hampton where he met Miss Lillian Young, destined to become Mrs. Francis Cabana in June of 1953.

The Cabana's would stay in Springfield where Francis found work at the Springfield Armory, and also found time, along with his wife Lillian, to raise five children, four boys, Francis Jr., Lawrence, Bruce, and Christopher, and their daughter Jocelyn.

In 1967 the Cabana's would move to Hoosick Falls, New York, in order to be closer to Francis's new job as a weapons designer and mechanical engineer at the Watervliet Arsenal's Research and Development Department.

In 1981 , after 15 years of service at the Watervliet Arsenal, Francis retired, and spent time summering in New Hampshire, fishing, woodworking, enjoying a good read, and indulging in his favorite past time, visiting with his grandchildren, which today number fifteen.

Like so many of our vets, Francis gave back through his involvement in community veteran organizations, and was a member and Past Commander of the V.F.W. Post #8417, a member of the American Legion, the 23rd Infantry Regiment of Korean War Veterans, and the Merrill's Marauders Association.

Sergeant Francis F. Cabana left us on November 16th, 1989 and on November 22nd, 1989 was buried with full military honors at the Arlington National Cemetery. Along with the military honors that day at Arlington there were also 10 balloons released, four blue, and six pink, representing the four grandsons and six granddaughters Francis had at the time of his death.

But what I find just as significant, is that like those balloons which could float free where ever they chose, we here in America get to live our lives just as free, going where we want, when we want, thanks to the efforts, sacrifice, and heroism of gentleman like the man whose life we are honored to celebrate here this morning, men like Sergeant Francis Floyd Cabana.

George E. Kewley

George E. Kewley was born in Troy, New York on the 17th day of September in 1926. Baptized three weeks later at the Grace Methodist Church by Pastor Frank W. Bevan, George was one of three children born to Edward and Gretchen Galbraith Kewley.

Along with sister Jeanne and brother John, George attended the former Pleasantdale Elementary School and then on to junior high at Knickerbacker, graduating from Lansingburgh High as a member of the Class of 1944.

While at the “Burgh” George distinguished himself on the football field and was an “All Area High School Football Selection” as both a fullback and linebacker.

Although only 17 years old when he graduated from high school, George didn’t hesitate, after all, his was a country at war, and on July 25th George enlisted in the United States Navy at the Albany Recruiting Center.

After attending “boot camp” at the Naval Training Center in Sampson, N.Y. George went on to the Naval Construction Training Center at Davisville, Rhode Island, where he was schooled as a carpenter. Upon completion of his training now Carpenter’s Mate Second Class Kewley was assigned to a Naval Construction Battalion in the Brooklyn Naval Yard.

George’s stay in the “Big Apple” would be brief and soon found himself in the South Pacific on the small island of Colacone off the coast of Samarra.

This was an especially dangerous time to be in the South Pacific. General MacArthur had the enemy on the run and the increasingly desperate Japanese were resorting to such tactics as suicide planes also known as Kamikazes.

Thankfully, the end would come soon, and following the two Atomic Bomb Attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki the Japanese signed the articles of surrender on the Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Harbor on September the 2nd, 1945.

Carpenter’s Mate Second George E. Kewley was honorably discharged on June 28th, 1946 when he officially separated from the military at the U.S. Navy’s Separation Center at Lido Beach, Long Island.

A grateful nation awarded George the American Theater Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Medal, the Phillipine Liberation Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Returning home George enrolled in Springfield College and at one point came close to signing a contract to play professional football for the New York Giants, but due to the inconsistent pay and lack of health insurance eventually decided against it, although he did play semi-pro ball for a number of years with the Troy Bulldogs.

On September 18th, 1949 George married Lois M. Danbury and after establishing their home in Lansingburgh would raise two sons, James and Robert.

Over the course of his working years George spent time at the Freihofer Baking Company, Borden Ice Cream, and would retire from Norton Company where he spent fifteen years as a material handler.

During this time George had put his naval training to good use and had built his own home on Tibbets Avenue in Troy.

As well as his love for the game of football George was also was an avid golfer. A member of the Mason's Phoenix Lodge George kept himself busy after his retirement by doing carpentry work and pursuing his love for the game of football.

This he accomplished via his involvement in Pop Warner Football. George was the first coach of the Troy Patriots 11-14 year old division, a group he would go on to lead to numerous championships.

George passed away on May 6th, 1984 and left behind a loving family, one which had grown to include grandchildren Erica, Matthew, Bryan, and Brent.

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to take part in this mornings ceremony, as we remember with honor and affection the life and times of Carpenter's Mate Second George E. Kewley, a member of that generation which has appropriately come to be known as this country's greatest.

Thomas B. Reiter, Sr.

Born on October 10th, 1923, in the City of Troy, Thomas B. Reiter, Sr. was one of three children born to Paul and Wilhemia Savery Reiter. Tom had two sisters, Lillian, now deceased, and Joan. Tom would also grow extremely close to his first cousin, Lou Savery, who Tom thought of as a brother. Tom attended Troy Schools, leaving in 1941 to become a machinist for the APW Paper Company in Albany.

In 1942, answering his country's "call to arms," 19 year old Tom entered into the United States Army Air Corp at Ft. Dix, New Jersey.

Tom was trained in aircraft maintenance at Roosevelt Field on Long Island and attended numerous specialty schools, some located at the aircraft factories themselves, including the Curtis - Wright P-40 Facility in Buffalo, New York, and the P-51 Factory in Inglewood, California.

Upon completion of training now Corporal Reiter was assigned to the 1369th Army Air Force Base Unit as an Auto-Pilot / Engineer Mechanic, performing maintenance and repair on all types of aircraft, including the P-40 "Warhawk," P-51's, C-54's, and the renowned B-24 Liberator.

Beyond routine maintenance, Tom was also responsible to ground inspect, troubleshoot, and replace damaged, worn, or defective parts whenever necessary.

Soon Corporal Reiter was promoted to sergeant and reassigned as an Aerial Engineer, assigned to C-54 and B-24 Bombers. As an Aerial Engineer Tom now flew as part of the crew, and in addition to keeping the plane in the air was responsible for manning the top turret gun, a crucial duty in that enemy fighters favorite angle of attack was often from above.

On November 10th, 1944 Sergeant Reiter was shipped overseas where he would see action in the Central-Burma, India-Burma, and China Theater of Operations. During this time keeping the Chinese supplied in their battle against the Japanese was a constant struggle. Lying between allied bases in India and the Chinese was enemy occupied Burma, a country noted for it's towering Himalayan Mountains, known to allied fliers who flew this perilous air route as the "Hump."

As part of the Army Air Force's Air Transport Command, or ATC, Sergeant Reiter was regularly flying "over the Hump" into China, and although

this hazardous duty would cost the lives of over 800 men, their efforts kept China in the war, keeping the Japanese from rallying their efforts in the Pacific.

Eventually American trained Chinese troops and American “guerillas” under the command of General Frank D. Merrill, who called themselves “Merrill’s Raider’s”, sustained by airdrops from Sergeant Reiter and those “flying the Hump,” would seize Japanese held airfields in Northern Burma, thereby reopening the Burma Road to China in January of 1945.

Three months later the Japanese were driven out of Burma and five months after that following the two Atomic Bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki the war was over.

Tom returned to the United States on December 14th, 1945 and received his honorable discharge on January 16, 1946 at Westover Field in Massachusetts.

For honorable service to his country Sergeant Reiter was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Badge, American Theatre Campaign Ribbon, Asiatic-Pacific Theatre Campaign Ribbon w/ 3 Battle Stars, and the Air Medal.

On April 6th, 1946, in the City of Rensselaer, Tom married Catherine Casey and together they would raise five sons, Bruce, Paul, Robert, Thomas, and Vincent.

In October of 1968 following Catherine’s death, Tom would be remarried to Madeline Lanoue, and their union would result in a son Ronald, and a daughter Mary Jean.

Tom would work for 37 years as a millwright at Altec Specialty Steel in Watervliet. During this time he would serve as president of both the Steel workers Union #2478 and the Capital District United Steel Works of America.

A communicant of St. Joseph’s Parish in Cohoes, Tom was an active member of the United Steel Workers Retiree Organization.

Tom loved to work in his garden and when not partaking in the fruits, or vegetables, of his labors, enjoyed dining out.

Tom passed away on January 26th, 2005, and in addition to his sons and daughter, is survived by a dozen grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

On a personal note , when Tom Reiter became a resident of Van Rensselaer Manor he was active in numerous activities such as the resident council banquet they hold each year to install their officers, and I always looked forward to seeing Mr. Reiter and that ever present “sparkle” in his eye.

A patriot and warrior whose tradition of service was thankfully passed down to his children, the Reiter Family continues to give, today evidenced by his sons’ Bob tireless efforts on behalf of our veterans in his position as head of our Veterans Agency here in Rensselaer County.

It is with great pleasure that I’m here today to help celebrate the life, times, and service to his nation of another of our Rensselaer County’s Finest, Sergeant Thomas B. Reiter, Sr.

Donald L. Dunham

Born in the Town of Brunswick on the 2nd day of August, 1920, Donald L. Dunham was one of three children born to father Leslie and mother Hazel Miller Dunham.

Don would attend Troy Schools along with his brother Howard and sister Audna, leaving school in the tenth grade to help out on the families recently purchased farm in the Town of Poestenkill.

Don would continue working on the family farm until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent entry of the United States into WW II, officially entering the United States Army on October 27th, 1942. Just prior to his leaving home Don married his childhood sweetheart, Marie Barnum, on September 22nd, 1942.

Assigned to General George Patton's storied Third Army, Don would serve as a Heavy Truck Operator and Rifleman during his attachment to the Thirds 10th Armored Infantry Regiment, 4th Armored Division.

The 4th Armored departed the U.S. for overseas duty from Boston, Massachusetts on December 29th, 1943, training in England for a short time before entering combat on the European continent in July of 1944.

Serving in both the Northern France and Rhineland Campaigns, Private Donald L. Dunham and his fellow soldiers would wage war in some of the severest winter conditions seen by an American fighting man since Valley Forge.

From the time Don and the men of the 4th Armored Division entered combat on the Normandy Peninsula in July of '44, just a few weeks after "D-Day", until the German surrender in April of 1945, there action was almost constant, and often at a maniacal pace , at one point battling over 260 miles in just 34 hours!

But the incident that would come to memorialize Pfc. Donald L. Dunham's military service would take place on September 27th, 1944 near the Town of Rechicourt, France.

On that day 1st Lt. James H. Fields of Houston, Texas, in an action which would earn him the Congressional Medal of Honor, the first ever awarded to a member of the Third Army, led a platoon of 55 men up a piece of real estate known only as Hill 265, and 24 hours later came back down followed by 13. One of those 13 was Pfc. Donald L. Dunham.

In a newspaper account of the awarding of the Medal of Honor it was stated that during that 24 hour period Lt. Fields platoon, whose total inventory of automatic weapons was comprised of two light machine guns, had encountered and destroyed an enemy force which was supported by artillery as well as three German Panther Tanks.

Don would carry a copy of that newspaper article in his wallet his entire life. Lt. Fields would later be quoted as saying, *“I’ll never know why they didn’t overrun us, we didn’t have a thing in the world to stop them, other than a bunch of fighting mad dogs who just wouldn’t give up. My platoon was wonderful that day, no one ever thought of withdrawing.”*

I’ve got a suspicion that except for Lt. Fields, Don Dunham, and a dozen other men, no one can ever know what really happened during those 24 hours on top of Hill 265.

As result of his actions on Hill 265 Don would earn the coveted Combat Infantry Badge, and would later be authorized to wear the Bronze Star.

In addition Don and the entire platoon would be awarded the French Fourragere Unit Award.

Don left Europe in October 1945, some six months after the fall of Nazi Germany, arriving in the United States on November the 6th.

For service to his country Pfc. Donald L. Dunham was awarded, in addition to the previously mentioned decorations and awards, a good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross and Star, the Honorable Service Lapel Pin, expert Badge w/Machine Gun Star, and Sharp Shooter Badge w/Rifle Bar.

In addition Don and his 4th Armored Division were also awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

Don returned to civilian life after being officially discharged on November 12th, 1945 at the Army’s Separation Center at Ft. Dix, New Jersey.

Don and Marie would take up residence in the Snyder’s Lake area and got busy starting a family. Soon their number had grown to four with the addition of their daughters Donna and Ruth.

Don was employed by our own Rensselaer County Highway Department, retiring in the early 1980's.

An avid baseball fan, Don gave back to his community as an active member of the Poestenkill Volunteer Fire Company , the community he had moved to upon leaving Snyder's Lake.

Forever linked to his fellow "vets" Don was a life-time member of both the Sullivan-Jones VFW and the Disabled American Veterans.

Don succumbed to a struggle with cancer on August 12th, 1993 and today is survived by, in addition to daughters Donna and Ruth, grandchildren Lisa, Brian, Donald, Tammy, Kevin, and John.

It is certainly an honor and a pleasure to be a part of this morning's recognition of another of our Rensselaer County Heroes, Pfc. Donald L. Dunham, a gentleman, a patriot, and one of the "fighting mad dogs" of Hill 265.

George T. Plante

Born in the City of Troy on July 5th, 1926 George T. Plante was one of eight children born to Ones H. and Alice Saddier Plante. George was raised in the City of Troy along with his three sisters, Margaret, better known as Mickey, Marie, Catherine, and his four brothers, Joseph, Charles, Rev. Richard, and Edward.

George attended St. Patrick's School and Catholic Central High School graduating in the Class of 1944.

On November 13th, 1944, less than six months after graduating high school eighteen year old George enlisted in the United States Marine Corp in the City of Albany. After completing Sea School in San Diego, California, George was assigned shore duty at the Boston Navy Yard.

A short time later George was assigned to serve aboard the USS Providence, a Light Cruiser. Departing Boston on June 13th of '45 the Providence arrived in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where after completing her "shake down cruises" returned to Boston via Newport, Rhode Island.

The Providence left Boston for overseas duty on November 7th, 1945 bound for the Mediterranean Sea. Private Plante and his Providence shipmates would visit such ports as Palermo, Naples, Marseille, and Athens, with most of their time being spent in Naples.

As an accomplished Marine Rifleman Private Plante was assigned to act as a bodyguard to Admiral James who had been deployed to the Mediterranean Region to reopen diplomatic relations with the entire zone.

One can only imagine the scope of the Admiral's mission in an area which had seen it all, naval, air, land campaigns, the rise and fall of Fascist Italy, and the devastation of some of Europe's most beautiful cities.

On June 16th, 1946, some nine months after the World War had come to an end with the formal surrender of Japanese Forces in Tokyo Harbor on board the battleship USS Missouri the Providence departed Mediterranean Waters, arriving in Philadelphia on June 25th, 1946.

Private 1st Class Plante returned home on the 12th day of August and ten days later was honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corp at the Navy's Newport, Rhode Island Marine Barracks.

A grateful nation awarded Private 1st George T. Plante an Honorable Service Lapel Pin, a Marine Corp Reserve Button, and a Good Conduct Medal.

Upon returning home George took advantage of the GI Bill of Right's tuition incentives, and in February of 1950 graduated from Siena College with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

While in school George married Miss Eileen Roberts and that brief 56 year marriage produced five children, daughter's Barbara and Rosemary, and sons David, Peter, and Geoffrey.

They in turn would make Eileen and George proud grand parents ten times over with the addition of David J., Gregory, Matthew, Brenna, Maura, Bridget, Katharine, Emily, Allison, and Megan.

After graduating from college George went to work for Allegheny Ludlum, which would eventually become known as Al-Tech Steel in Watervliet, a specialty steel firm from which George would retire in 1989 after 37 years of service.

In his spare time George was an "Elk's Elk" and a member of the Watervliet Lodge for fifty-five years, a twenty year member of the American Legion Post # 1489 in Wynantskill and a life time member of the USMC Marine Corps League in Troy.

A faithful parishioner of St. Jude the Apostle in Wynantskill for over half a century, George was president of the Knights of St. Jude and a head usher for over forty years.

When not helping others, which wasn't often, George enjoyed bowling, baseball, fishing, and gardening.

George Plante's dedication and love and service to his country was obviously in his D.N.A. All four of his brothers as well as one sister were all in uniform at the same time, with the youngest brother Edward having had to get creative about his birth records in order join the Navy, at the tender age of 15!

A few decades later Ed's son would serve two tours with the 101st Airborne, and later become a victim of a tragic automobile accident near his base in Tennessee.

Charles, another of George's brothers, forged his birth certificate way back in 1934 in order to join the National Guard, which would be federalized as the 27th Infantry and see combat in the Pacific during WW II.

His son George would serve 27 years in the Navy, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

There are also two other nephews who served in both the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts, one of them, Charles son George, serving in both.

Sadly we lost George Plante on February 9th, 2005, and as couldn't be more appropriate, was buried with full military honors in the Gerald Solomon Saratoga National Military Cemetery.

I'm honored, pleased, and humbled to be here this morning and take part in these proceedings which to us are so very, very, special, but to many of the Plante Family it just must seem like any other day. After all, they all love their country, they all jump at the chance to put themselves in harms way to defend it, and they all deserve all the thanks, honor, and gratitude that this great nation can offer.

Private 1st Class Plante and family, I salute you!!

Joseph M. Muscatello

Born on December 19th, 1922 in the city of Troy, Joseph M. Muscatello, destined to one day be Joe Sr., was one of six children born to father John and his mother, the former Rose Minnetti. Joseph had four sisters, Theresa, Mary, Carmella, and Clementine, known by most as Clem, and a brother John.

Educated in the Troy Public Schools Joe was an outstanding athlete, being named to both the Troy All-City Football and Baseball Teams. Joe would continue to play ball after his school years playing baseball with the Emerald Club as well as a stint in the semi- pro's with the Lou Maslon Panthers. Later in life Joe's athletic prowess would be recognized with his being inducted into both the Troy High and Emerald Club's Hall of Fame.

After his high school graduation in 1942, Joe, like many Americans, assumed that now that the U.S. had joined the allied effort as a result of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, the war would soon be over. Unfortunately, that was not to be the case, and some eight months later in February of 1943 Joe was inducted into the United States Army.

Following basic training Private Muscatello, assigned to the 455th Ordinance EVAC Company, departed for England on the 5th day of October, 1943.

Once there Joe and his fellow G.I.'s would train endlessly for what was then the only whispered about "Operation Overlord". This, of course, was the invasion of Hitler's Fortress Europe, to be better known as the Normandy Invasion or "D" Day.

Although officially trained and designated as a "Truck Driver Heavy" Joe's title was often a "catchall" classification and in his case gave little hint to his real love and specialty, that being the Army's new M5 Tank. The M5, an upgraded version of the M3, was an 18 ton behemoth powered by twin Cadillac gas engines capable of propelling what the Army called a light tank at speeds close to 40 MPH.

The M5 also sported a contraption on its "nose" called a Cullin Cutter, a device which looked very much like a giant pair of hedge clippers. This ungainly looking set-up had Joe and others scratching their heads until June of 1944 when they got a look at the Normandy Beachhead which was backed up by miles and miles of hedgerows, natural tank obstacles which if not for the Cullin Hedgerow Cutter, could have caused a much bleaker outcome for the allies at Normandy.

After taking part in the Normandy Invasion PFC Muscatello and the allied forces fought their way across Europe for another fifteen months. During this time Joe would take part in those campaigns that we who are here each month have come to know all too well. Ardennes, Central Europe, Northern France, Rhineland, all names we associate with some of the fiercest land fighting to take place in Europe, often in horrendous weather conditions.

But to Joe and the thousands of other heroes he ate, slept, and fought with, it was just the “way it was” when serving one’s country.

Unlike too many others Joe would come through unscathed, and seven months after the German Surrender, on November 21st, 1945, Private First Class Joseph M. Muscatello departed Europe, arriving stateside on the first day of December.

A short time later on December 7th, four years to the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Joe was officially discharged at the Army’s Separation Center located at Ft.Dix, New Jersey.

For selfless service in defense of his country a grateful nation awarded Private First Class Muscatello the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal w/4 Bronze Stars, the American Campaign Medal, a World War II Victory Medal, a Marksman Badge w/Carbine Bar, and a Good Conduct Medal.

Returning home to South Troy Joe went to work for Behr Manning Corporation, where he would rise to the position of superintendent before retiring after 41 years of service.

In 1947 Joe married Grace Mastrodicasa and together they set up a home in Wynantskill where they would have three children, Joseph, Judith, and Jean. Tragically, after only six years of marriage, Grace passed away in 1953, sadly leaving behind Joseph and their three young children.

On July 9th, 1955 Joe was remarried to the former Lillian Pitts Garrison who also brought Joe’s children a new step-brother Thomas. Joe and Lillian would be married forty-six years until the time of Lillian’s death in 2001.

Joe stayed active in the community via his memberships in the Troy Elks, the Norton Company Retiree’s Club, and was always heavily involved in activities at St. Michael’s Church where he was a communicant and long time member of the church’s men’s club. He also stayed in touch with his fellow veterans as a member of the American Legion’s Wynantskill Post.

In his leisure time Joe remained a sports fanatic and as one who loved to use his hands, could often be found in the middle of building one thing or another.

Joe passed away in the Van Rensselaer Manor Nursing Home on April 14th of 2005 and in addition to his children and step-son is survived by seven grandchildren, Laurie, Lelan, Benjamin, Nathanael, Natalie, Catherine, and Jessica, as well as several nieces and nephews.

Joe Muscatello's life was extraordinary in it's dedication to country, family, and all those values that we as Americans have come to cherish. But as extraordinary as it was, it was so like so many of the stories we hear here each and every month.

We as a nation have been blessed with people like Joe Muscatello. Men and women who think nothing of putting themselves in harms way to not only defend their own, but indeed risk there lives to liberate people they never have nor never will know. That's what an American fighting man or woman is about.

It's not just about defending our country, it's about defending what our country has come to stand for. Liberty, Freedom, Independence.

This morning it gives me great pleasure to not only honor and remember Joe Muscatello, but to thank him as well. To thank him for my liberty. To thank him for my freedom, and to thank him for my independence.

Julian Richard Mason

SOUTH PACIFIC THEATER OF OPERATIONS WORLD WAR II

JULIAN RICHARD MASON - was born on January 10, 1921 in Albany, New York. He was one of nine children born to Thomas & Sophia. Julian had four brothers: Michael, Thomas, Frank and Joe, and four sisters: Veronica, Frances, and twin sisters Genevieve and Agnes.

Julian, was educated in the Albany Schools and was a graduate of Albany High School.

MILITARY HISTORY

19 year old Julian Richard Mason entered into the United States Marine Corps in Albany, New York on October 15, 1940. Julian was stationed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and assigned to the Guard Company at the time the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

It was while Julian was stationed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard he met, through a mutual friend, Constance Bergmann, who was raised in Brooklyn, New York. They married approximately a year and half later at a ceremony held in Constance's parents' home on August 10, 1942.

Shortly after getting married, Julian was shipped overseas to participate in the South Pacific Theater of Operations. Julian was assigned to Company "H" 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment of the 3rd Marine Division taking part in the invasion, seizure, occupation and defense of the Empress Augusta Bay Beachhead, Bougainville, Solomon Islands.

The Japanese had moved into the lower Solomon Islands and were rushing to complete an airfield on Guadalcanal from which they could threaten the lifeline between Hawaii and Australia. On August 7, 1942 preceded by Army Air Force B-17 reconnaissance and bombing missions, U.S. Marines made a surprise landing on the island. For the next three months, Army Air Force, Navy, and Marine forces fought bitterly against heavy odds, by year's end had repulsed the enemy's most serious attempts to drive U.S. forces from the Island.

On November 1, 1943, Marines landed on Bouganville in the final major operation of the Solomons campaign. The Third Marine Unit smashed a Japanese counter landing, completely wiping out the Japanese 23rd Infantry, despite supply shortages, communication deficiencies, and terrain difficulties. For their courageous and continuous aggressive fighting action as a front line regiment for a total of fifty-two consecutive days against the enemy (November 1 to December 22, 1943) the Third Marine Division was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation.

Combat First Sergeant Julian Richard Mason would spend over eighteen months fighting in the Solomon Islands conflict overseas before returning home to the States.

Upon return to the States, First Sergeant Julian Richard Mason was assigned to the Guard Company of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, responsible for its security. (The Brooklyn Navy Yard is now known as the New York Naval Shipyard)

DISCHARGE:

First Sergeant Julian Richard Mason was honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps on June 27, 1945 from New York, New York and for his honorable service to his country he was awarded the Purple Heart, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal and Sharpshooter Badge.

PERSONAL:

Julian studied at Siena and Russell Sage Colleges, with more than four years credits – majoring in Business Administration and Sociology and completed N.Y.S. Pre-law studies.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS/HOBBIES:

- **Member of the former Evangelical United Brethren Church (Treasurer) – West Sand Lake**
- **Member of the Salem United Methodist Church (Trustee), and its Men’s Club – West Sand Lake**

- **Chairman of the “Veterans for Uncle Sam” in Troy.**
- **Boy Scouts of America:**
 - Field Commissioner on Exploring, Uncle Sam Council**
 - Troop Committeeman**
 - Awarded Wood Badge**
 - Order of the Arrow-brotherhood member**
 - Awarded membership in the International Society of the Eagle Claw**
- **Julian organized and directed a Teen Age Center in West Sand Lake for three years-1956**
- **Spearheaded “Reverend Robert A. Hammond Day” I West Sand Lake to benefit the local Pastor stricken with polio**
- **Member of the West Sand Lake Fire Company for many years**
- **Life member of the Veterans of foreign Wars**
- **Life member of the Veterans of Foreign War National Home for Children**
- **Awarded National Citation and Membership in the V.F.W. National Hall of Fame**
- **Jr. & Sr. Vice Commander V.F.W. Post 715, N.Y.C: 1945-1946**
- **Commander of the V.F.W. Post 3025, West Sand Lake, four terms: 1952-1956**
- **Commander of the V.F.W. Hudson-Mohawk Counties Council – 1955**
- **Service Office for the V.F.W. Post 3024, Hudson-Mohawk Counties Council, and District Three**
- **National Aide-de-Camp, V.F.W., for ten years**

- **Placed 1st Place in both the V.F.W. National Membership Contest and the Publications Contest**
- **V.F.W. Post 3025 and Ladies Auxiliary awarded V.F.W. National Citation for Poppy sales in 1953 and also awarded 2nd Place in the National V.F.W. Community Service Contest.**
- **Organized and instituted V.F.W. Posts #8758 in Troy and #7396 in North Greenbush**
- **Member of American Legion, DAV, Army & Navy Union**
- **American Red Cross, Board of Directors, Rensselaer County Chapter**
- **Free & Accepted Masons, 32o, Schodack Union Lodge #87 and Chairman of Service and Rehab. Committee**
- **Scottish Rite, Albany Sovereign Consistory**
- **Apollo Commandry #15, Knights Templar**
- **Past President of the Mutual Association for the Protection Against Horse Thieves**
- **Julian also enjoyed hunting and was an avid fisherman**

CLOSING:

Sadly, Julian passed away on December 16, 1971 leaving behind his wife of thirty years, Constance Bergmann Mason, daughter, Catherine Mason Sullivan and son-in-law Charles E. Sullivan, Jr., son, Richard A. Mason and daughter-in-law Sandra Laurenzo Mason, and two grandchildren, Timothy Charles Sullivan and Constance Amanda Sullivan.

Alfred J. Meyers

Born in the City of Albany on the 7th day of June in 1920 Alfred J. Meyers was one of five children born to Alfred and Edna Meyers. Growing up in Albany Alfred attended Albany public schools along with his brother George and sisters Alberta, Edna, and Mildred.

Following his school years Alfred found work as a printer's helper with "NYRA", a temporary work agency, and stayed there right up 'til his entry into the United States Army on May 15th of 1942.

Trained at Camp Upton, located in the mid- western portion of Upstate New York, Alfred qualified and was awarded marksmanship badges for both the 45 Caliber Pistol and the M-1 Rifle.

Assigned to the U.S. Army Infantry Head Quarter's Company & 8th Tank Destroyer Group Alfred would spend the next couple of years stateside prior to departing for Europe on September 5th of 1944.

Originally assigned as a Duty Soldier, Albert's culinary skills were somehow found out, and he soon found himself doing double duty, serving as both a cook and a Duty Soldier.

Serving in the European Theatre of Operations, Pfc. Myers would see action and take part in some of the fiercest fighting of WWII, encompassing the Northern France, Ardennes, Central Europe, and Rhineland Campaigns. Too often fighting in horrendous weather conditions against a German occupying force all too willing to fight to the death, losses on both sides were horrific, but thankfully, Pfc. Myers, "Big Al" to his friends, would come through unscathed.

On June 24th, 1945 Alfred left Europe arriving stateside about two weeks later on July 7th. Four months later Pfc. Myers was officially separated from the U.S. Army at the Army Separation Center located at Camp Bowie, Texas.

For meritorious service to his country Private First Class Alfred J. Myers was awarded the European- African- Middle- Eastern Campaign Medal , Army Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, and the American Campaign Ribbon.

Returning to civilian life "Big Al" sought out a young lady he had met when he was preparing to enter the service. Margaret Kelly, a blushing school girl when last he had seen her, was now a young woman, and on June the 7th, 1947, Alfred

made good on a promise he had made some five years earlier, marrying Margaret at St. John's Church in Albany. "Big Al" would never have an excuse for forgetting his wedding anniversary, as his birthday was also June 7th!

Together Al and Margaret would raise eleven children in their new hometown of Rensselaer.

Always working hard to support Margaret and their eight sons, Alfred Jr., Edward, Keith, Dean, Lawrence, Douglas, Kyle, Michael, and three daughters, Edna, Margaret, and Linda, Al picked up his career where he had left off before the war, returning to the printing business.

After stints with both Hamilton News and the Times Union, Al went to work for Williams Press in Menands, working there until the time of their closing, at which time he returned to Hamilton News from where he would retire.

An avid baseball fan, "Big Al", who had raised eight boys, was a keen supporter of Little League, and over the years was active in both the Albany South End and Rensselaer Little League's. Some of Al's favorite times were spent on those fields coaching and managing his own sons. He would also live to cheer on some of his twenty-two grandchildren as well.

When not partaking in "America's Favorite Past Time" Al could often be found pursuing his other passion, playing Bingo. He also loved to volunteer his time picking up donated baked goods and bringing a special treat to the children at Vanderheyden Hall.

On July 28th, 2004 Albert passed away leaving behind his loving family which had grown to include fifteen great-grand-children.

It is my honor and pleasure to be here this morning as we remember the life, times, and selfless service of one of Rensselaer County's true hero's, Private First Class Alfred J. Myers, Sr.

William J. Ryan, Jr.

In the City of Troy on the second day of July in 1908 William J. Ryan Jr. was born to parents William and Josephine Conroy Ryan.

Bill, along with his sister Margaret and brothers John, Joseph, William, and Harold, would attend St. Francis School, School 12, and Catholic Central High School, graduating in 1926.

In 1927, a short time after his graduation, Bill enlisted in the United States Navy, serving his nation for the first time in a world still at peace, being honorably discharged in 1929.

Upon returning to civilian life Bill went to work for General Electric and from there to the D&H Railroad.

In the early 1940's the world was again at war, with the United States precariously clinging to it's position of neutrality , when in fact America was supporting Great Britain and the allied forces via "lend lease", a euphemism for it's policy of supplying the allies with armament and other war supplies.

This of course would come to a screeching halt on December 7th, 1941, with the Japanese Sneak Attack on Pearl Harbor. Severely crippling the United States Pacific Fleet, this devastating assault on America would culminate in the United States declaring war on Japan, which in turn would prompt Germany to declare war on the United States.

The conflict which until then had been known as the "war in Europe" had now truly become a World War.

It was this climate of national pride and patriotism that prompted Bill and many just like him to answer the call to arms of this great nation. Indeed, within five months of that fateful day in early December 194 1, all five of the Ryan "boys" had enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Bill and his brother Harold enlisted on the same day, September 28th, 1942, which happened to be Harold's 19th birthday.

Bill was assigned to the U.S.S. Vulcan upon which he would serve his sea duty with the Atlantic Fleet. The lead ship of a group of repair vessels known as "Vulcan Class", the Vulcan would become the first US Navy ship on which women would serve (with the exception of nurses on hospital ships).

The 530 foot Vulcan had a beam of 73.2 feet, displaced over 16,000 tons loaded and delivered 11000 horsepower to it's twin screws via four boilers and two steam turbines. Although a repair ship the Vulcan had the ability to defend it self utilizing its four 20mm gun placements.

Built in Camden, New Jersey by the New York Shipbuilding Corp. the U.S.S. Vulcan was commissioned on June 14th, 1941 and would be decommissioned after over 50 years of service on September 30th, 1991.

After a shakedown cruise to Puerto Rico and post shakedown repairs at the Philadelphia Navy Yard the Vulcan would make it's way to Argentina, Newfoundland via Casco Bay, Maine.

About this time the American Fleet was becoming more involved in the "Battle for the Atlantic" and at the request of the Icelandic government opened two naval bases at Reykjavik and Hvalfjordur. Before long the Americans had nicknamed these ports "Rinky Dink" and Valley Forge" respectively.

Amid fears that the German Battleship Tirpitz, the sister ship of the infamous Bismarck, would break out into the Atlantic as the Bismarck had done, the Navy dispatched a Task Force to Iceland to counter any such move .The Task Force, designated TF4, consisted of a carrier, the battleship Mississippi, a cruiser, four destroyers, and a repair ship, the Vulcan.

While the German battleship never did move to engage, the Task Force would have it's hands full dealing with German U-Boats. The Vulcan would practically rebuild at sea two destroyers, one torpedoed by a U-Boat, the other rammed by a Norwegian freighter during a fierce storm.

The Vulcan would remain in the chilly Atlantic waters of Iceland with a brief respite in Boston for dry dock repairs. Back at the Hvalfjordur Base, or Valley Forge to the Americans, the Vulcan would relieve the U.S.S. Melville. It was at about this time that Petty Officer Second Class Ryan joined the crew of the Vulcan.

In April of '43 the Vulcan got underway for Londonderry, Northern Ireland and from there on to Hampton Roads , Virginia for repairs. Headed for the Mediterranean in late June the Vulcan would send a fire and rescue party alongside the burning British ammunition ship Arrow. Three Vulcan sailors would be decorated for staying with the burning vessel while cutting through the hull to rescue British sailors trapped below decks.

The Vulcan would remain off the Northern African Coast until the summer of 1944. In August of that year Petty Officer Ryan and the crew of the Vulcan would support the invasion of Southern France earning the Vulcan her lone Battle Star.

By late 1944 the Vulcan was needed in the Pacific and after affecting repairs at Norfolk arrived in Guadalcanal in February of 1945.

She would operate out of Tulagi, Noumea and Ulithi for the remainder of the war , eventually servicing amphibious units taking part in the assault on Okinawa.

Petty Officer Second Ryan was honorably discharged for the second time on September 22nd. 1945 at the Navy's separation Center at Lido Beach, on New York's Long Island.

For his service to his country he was awarded the WW II Victory Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Medal, and the American Theatre Medal.

Returning home Bill married Kathryn Mlynarsky in late 1945.

It was at this time that Bill joined the Troy Police Department, working his way up from a patrolman to a Detective Sergeant during his almost thirty two years on the force. During his career Bill worked just about every major case in the city.

One such case, involving the Lottie Danbury murder, would earn Bill a place on the True Detective Magazine's Honor Roll which denoted his receiving the magazines Distinguished Service Award in May of 1977.

A devoted baseball fan, Bill loved the Yankees and was active in both the P.B.A. and the Order of the Purple Heart.

As the five Ryan's demonstrated in WWII, the Ryan name was one synonymous with service to country, so it comes as no surprise that my good buddy Jack Ryan, Bill's nephew, served in Viet Nam.

Bill Ryan left us on November the 4th, 1996 and left behind a legacy and lifetime of fighting the good fight , from the high seas of WW II to the mean streets of Troy.

It is truly an honor to be present this morning as we honor and remember the life and times of another of our Rensselaer County Hero's , Petty Officer Second Class William J. Ryan, Jr.

Clyde S. Ray

Born on May the 1st in the year 1911 Clyde S. Ray was the fourteenth of seventeen children born to Samuel and Ada Fordson Ray.

Raised in the city of Memphis, Tennessee, Clyde would attend Memphis Public Schools and hold down various jobs in the Memphis area, including one as a stationary fireman, utilizing his talent and penchant for all things mechanical.

Clyde enlisted in the United States Army on December 4th, 1942 and received his training at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

Ft. Benning, known as the “Home of the Infantry” is a United States Army Training and Doctrine Command Installation.

Established in 1918 Ft. Benning is named for Confederate Major General Henry L. Benning. The installation is spread over 182,000 acres and is today the home of the U.S. Army Infantry Training Brigade, the U.S. Infantry School, Ranger Training Brigade, Airborne School, and School of the Americas.

Upon completion of his training Private Clyde S. Ray was assigned to the 1449th SCU Provisional Detachment as an artillery mechanic.

As an artillery mechanic Clyde’s primary responsibility was to supervise and perform maintenance and recovery of all field artillery cannon weapon systems.

On any given day, often under battlefield conditions, Clyde would be diagnosing equipment malfunctions, troubleshooting and performing unit maintenance, and testing and making adjustments to firing systems.

In September of 1943 Private Ray departed for the Asian Pacific Theatre arriving on October the 17th.

On arrival Private Ray finds American Forces on the march across the Pacific. The Marshall Islands have fallen and the allies are closing in on the Japanese Home Islands

Clyde and his 1449th brethren will serve in the Pacific supporting the allies “Island Hopping Campaign” from October 1943 to November of 1944.

For meritorious service to his country Clyde received the American Theatre Service Medal, Asiatic Pacific Service Medal, a Good Conduct Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Clyde was honorably discharged on February 10th, 1946 at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Reuniting with his wife, the former Birdell Brown Jones, Clyde and his family relocated to Troy in July of 1953.

Clyde and Birdell would have nine children; Carolyn, Willester, Shirley, Lola, Josephine, Clydell, Lee, Evelyn, and Edith .At the time of his death Clyde and Birdell were also the proud grandparents of 32, great-grandparents of 73, and great-great grandparents of 2.

When Clyde retired from Union Local 190 he had worked for over fifty years as a brick mason.

A lifetime member of the Corporal William A. Dickerson Post # 8758 Clyde was also proud to count himself as one of the three founding members of the International Order of Free & Accepted Masons Golden Crown Lodge #73.

A man of faith Clyde was an active member of the World Harvest Family Worship Center Church of God and Christ.

When not marching in a parade with the Dickerson Post or helping out with one of their many fundraisers, Clyde, an avid fisherman, could often be found on the banks of one of our local fishing holes.

Sadly, on October 3rd, 2005, 94 year old Clyde, a resident of the Kennedy Towers, passed away, leaving behind his family, a living legacy of a self made man. Clyde is remembered today as a warrior and patriot who didn't hesitate when asked to serve his country.

It is my pleasure to be here this morning and take part in these proceedings honoring and remembering the life, times, and service of another of our Rensselaer County Hero's, Private Clyde S Ray.

John C. Nolan

Born in the City of Troy on the 21st day of May in 1916 John C. Nolan was one of seven children born to Clarence Andrew and Georgianna Delong Nolan.

John grew up in the Glen Avenue area or what is now known as North Central Troy with brothers James, Ira, and George, and sisters Mary, Evelyn, and Katherine.

John's education was one which included both public and private schooling, attending School I Grammar School in Troy, the Franklin Academy in Malone New York, and later, in 1953, receiving his GED from Troy High School. During that same period John also studied carpentry at the Troy Carpentry School.

As a young man, prior to entering the service, he worked as an ice cream maker for Hosler's Trojan Ice Cream, which would later be better known to most of us as Borden's Ice Cream.

Enlisting in the United States Army on October 15th, 1940 in the City of Troy John was assigned to the 27th Infantry Division's 105th Infantry as a Technician 4th Grade Communications Chief. As a Communications Chief John supervised and participated in the installation, operation, and maintenance of communication networks.

Leaving for overseas on March 10th, 1942, John and the 27th would spend their combat time in the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre of Operations participating in numerous battles, the most noteworthy perhaps being the last major battle of World War II, the Ryukyus Campaign.

During that campaign, on July 17th, 1944, on Saipan in the Western Pacific, John distinguished himself as a hero in every sense of that word. On that day, north of Tanapag Harbor then Sergeant Nolan went forward of established lines, or in other words "enemy territory", three separate times to bring back wounded men.

On one of those trips Sgt. Nolan spent some 30 minutes with a wounded soldier, all the time under constant enemy rifle fire, before being able to evacuate the man to a rear position.

As a result of his actions that day John was awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry.

On another occasion John was part of rescue party which had volunteered for a mission to evacuate wounded to a medical unit. Lacking room in the tank being used for the rescue Sgt. Nolan volunteered to remain behind with one of the wounded until the tank could return about a half hour later.

John was honorably discharged from the army on September 21st, 1945. For distinguished service to his country John, in addition to his Silver Star, received a Bronze Star, a Presidential Unit Citation, American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars with Arrowhead, WWII Victory Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII, and a Marksman Badge with Carbine Bar.

John also declined a Purple Heart as well, for fear of alarming his parents.

Returning home to Troy John was married to Corneila Jane Ott in April of 1952, at St.Patrick's Church in Troy. John and Connie would raise three sons, Thomas, James, and John, Jr. and never lived farther then a few blocks from John's childhood home on Glen Avenue in Troy.

John went to work for the New York Telephone Company retiring after 32 years of service.

Raising three boys John was active in both the Lansingburgh Little League and the Boy Scouts. Also a member of the Tibbets Cadets, the 20th Division Association, and the Telephone Pioneers, John loved to walk his dog in Knickerbacker Park or just kibitz with his neighbors.

John and Connie's three boys would bestow on them 9 grandchildren, Joseph, Sarah, Kathy, Colleen, Christine, Thomas, Mary, Erin, and Derek.

John left us on February 22nd, 1997. Leaving behind a grieving family John would be joined by his beloved Connie only nine months later.

I am greatly honored to be allowed to take part in this morning's proceedings as we gather to honor another of our "all too soon vanishing WWII hero's", John C. Nolan, Sr.