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“THEY MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE”

MEMORIAL DAY CIRCA 1956

Quickly running out of the sacristy onto Clearfield St., so I can get home as fast as possible. Our entire family including my brother Anthony and my cousin Al, are going to Burholme Park for a holiday picnic. I am very happy to have served the 7 am Mass with Fr. Doolan this morning, because he always says the mass exceptionally fast. The only problem that I had was saying the Latin responses so quickly, especially the Suscipiot, without getting tongue tied. I could not pay attention to the sermon, because I was preoccupied with thinking about the great time we are going to have at the picnic today. Approaching Fox St. I notice Mr. Joe Vitale standing at the Blessed Mother statue on the corner of the Rectory parking lot. I say hello to him, but he doesn't answer. Noticing tears coming down his cheek, I ask him if he is OK. He answers, “Aron! I didn't see you there. I am just sad remembering all of the guys from the neighborhood who were killed in WWII.” Wondering why he is at this statue, he explains to me that, “This is St. Mary's shrine dedicated to the deceased service men of WWII.” “Aron”, he says in his calm and even more than usual soft spoken manner, “I can remember many of the guys when they entered the service to defend our country. I can even remember some of the plans they had for their future. You were too young to remember any of these guys, but let me tell you their dreams shall

never materialize. This is the reason I often stop at this shrine and recall their memory and hope that they will never be forgotten. I make believe that each and every one of them are standing beside me and I dread the day that Hitler and Hirohito started that awful war. I hope and pray that kids like you will never forget what those guys did for all of us. They gave up their lives and they had so much to offer us, if they had only been able to return home and realize their dreams. One guy who died was Albert Cervone who lived on your block at 3064 Judson. He was killed in Dec. 1944.” I interrupt him and say “Mr. Vitale I was born in Dec of 1944.” “This is exactly what I mean Aron. These men made the ultimate sacrifice, so that people like me can continue to live in peace and kids like you can be born into freedom. He hands me a few pieces of loose leaf paper and slowly walks away down Fox St saying, “We must never forget what they did for all of us.” Looking at the papers, as I walk over Clearfield St., I begin to read the names, addresses, and information about their deaths. Turning at Judson St. I stop in front of 3064 and picture this man Albert Cervone. I visualize him as a larger than life person regardless of what his stature might actually have been. I continue to slowly walk down Judson St. reading the information on the papers. The writing is small and difficult to read, because it is written in what is now faded and smeared lead pencil. I begin to recite

each persons name on the list.

James Owens, 2434 Toronto, 5/42
John Leonard, 2722 N. 19th, 8/43
Henry Kasly, 2506 W. Huntingpark, 9/43
Ted Kreitner, 1919 W. Somerset, 1/43, Sicily
Joseph Jones, 2518 Oakdale, 1/26/43
Frances O'Keefe, 2514 Lehigh, 1/43, Mediterranean
Cliff McGoldrick, 3217 N. 17th, 1/20/43, Italy
Ed Nyland, 2603 N. 23rd, 1/11/43, Holland
Norman DeRobert, 3125 N. 25th, 7/23/44, Med.
John Pierce 2524 N. Darnel, 7/43
Larry Strahlendorf, 3128 N. 28th, 6/24/44, Normandy
William Haney, 2761 N. Janey, 6/21/44, France
Benners Smith, 2610 Somerset, 7/16/44, France
Sam Ferppi Jr., 3130 N. 24th, 4/12/44, Germany
Diulano Spirito, 2415 W. Allegheny, 8/44
Nathaniel Orso, 3040 N. 23rd, 8/44, Italy
Anthony Drogo, worked at Horn&Hardart, 7/20/44 Fr
Karl Smith, 2448 N. Marsden, 9/44, Italy
Harold Trimble, 2719 N. Newkirk, 8/19/44, So. Pac.
Dominick Romano, 3103 N. Taylor, 7/16/44, France
Joseph Herring, 2719 N. Newkirk, 7/6/44, France
John Garrity, 2841 N. 25th, 9/2/44, France
George Logan, 2618 Oakdale, 8/8/44, France
Joe Morris, 2754 N. Ringold, 9/13/44, France
James Picaniello, 3211 N. Dover, 7/28/44, Guam
Edward Barbarosa, 3012N. Bambray, 9/20/44, So Pa
William Binder, 2712 Huntington, 10/9/44, India
Joe Krause, 2824 N. Darnel, 10/11/44, France
Jerry Scrittone, 3044 N. 21st, 9/11/44, France
Alvin Jorlow, 2462 N. Natrona, 11/44, Europe
Morton Boshel, 2634 N. Hollywood, 8/13/44, France
Paulen Wollman, 2601N. Hollywood, 8/27/44, France
Bernard Jacobs, 2540 N. 24th, 7/6/44, France
John Jusco, 2933 N. VanPelt, 10/25/44, Germany
Charles Peters, 2718 N. 24th, 12/10/44, Germany
John McBrath, 3102 Spangler, 12/19/44, Belgium
John Richardson, 2757 N. Judson, 1/20/45, Leyk
John Maglenn, 1517 Marston, 12/28/44, Germany
Al Cervone, 3064 N. Judson, 12/44, Luxemburg
Arthur Dealy, 2319 W. Clearfield, 12/18/44, Germany
Larry Wilmore, 2443 N. 19th, 1/7/44, Belgium
George Rodkey, 2827 N. 22nd, 10/26/44, France
Francis Ryan, 2419 Huntington, 11/21/44, Germany
Joe Montelone, 3056 N. 23rd, 11/19/44, Europe
Edwin Woolley, 2921 N. Bailey, 11/11/44, France
Edward McBride, 2825 N. 26th, 11/17/44, Germany

Angelo Dibricida, 2824 W. Clementine, 10/28/44, Fr.
 Albert Salvia, 2018 W. Indiana, 11/17/44, France
 Joe Valtig, 2742 W. Stenner, 12/30/44, Bulge
 Jack Smith, 2962 N. Bonsall, 1/11/45, Belgium
 Walter Burke, 2614 Seltzer, 2/10/45, Germany
 Arthur Polak, 2424 N. 32nd, 1/25/45, Luxembourg
 Fred Benincasa, 3012 N. 23rd, 3/45, Europe
 Harry Stolper, 2715 Somerset, 2/18/45, Mindiner
 Tom McDermott, 2826 N. 20th, 12/25/44, Europe
 Frank Balistrucci, 2867 N. Taylor, 2/27/45, Holland
 John Quinn, 2917 N. Judson, 2/21/45, Germany
 John Vespa, 3023 N. 23rd, 12/18/44, France
 Robert Allen, 3227 N. Hillman, 4/45, Paris
 Marvin Rausch, 2854 N. 25th, 4/18/45, Janina Is.
 Lawrence Fanelli, 3032 N. 25th, 10/31/44, Holland
 Francis Fioria Jr., 2630 W. Cumberland, 4/8/45, Ger.
 Raymond Cooner, 3116 Napa, 7/12/45, France
 Ed Hartley, 2614 W. Seltzer, 2/28/45, Iwo Jima
 Francis McDonnelly, 2733 N. Newkirk, 8/44
 William Litton, 2732 N. 22nd, 10/13/44, Germany
 Frances McKinley, 3253 N. 27th, 4/45, Japan
 Joe Rossetti, 3111 N. Kemberger, 12/13/44, Bulge
 Carl Thorpe, 3110 N. 29th, 3/27/45, Okinawa
 James Ciccio
 William Clomaldi
 John Dambra, 3022 N. 23rd St.
 John DiBenedetto, 2007 W. Indiana Ave.
 Santino DiPergio, 2921 N. VanPelt St.
 Rocco Diannetti, 2845 N. Ringgold, Italy
 John Gregorio
 Albert Good, 2128 W. Cambria, 3/45, France
 Ernest Mappa, 2123 W. Cambria St.
 Michael Monti
 John Paoni, 3006 N. 23rd, 4/45, Pacific
 William Richards
 Lawrence Salvia, 2905 N. Bonsall St.
 Alfred Davis
 John Serpico, 2943 N. Bonsall
 Albert Deaglio

I reach the corner of Judson and Indiana, and I see Rocky Giannetti with an American flag in his hand. His dad Joe and his Uncle Willie are talking to Doc Musitano. Rocky says to me, "We are all going to the Sons of Italy Club to honor the men who died in WWII." Jules Capriotti is walking pass with his brother Wimpy and calls to me, "Aron are you and Al coming to the Sons of Italy? Nick Marcellino, our hero of the battle of Guadalcanal, will be giving a talk on his experiences

during the war." I ask Jules if he was in the war and he replies, "Yes! I was in Europe and fought in the Battle of Bulge." I quickly run into my house and ask Uncle Al, if we can go to the commemoration and he agrees. On our way to the ceremony, as we turn the corner at Lambert and Indiana, there are so many people. There are Gene and Gilda Lucarini with their daughter Karen in a stroller. Bill and Johnny Basile talking to Hot Wires and Pat Scoles who are standing next to Nicky and Rose Bello. Goggie and his mother Aunt Tessie wave to us as Mike and Louie Citro cross Lambert Street. Approaching the club there are rows of people standing behind the Color Guard and a row of soldiers, rifles at their sides, lined across Toronto St. between the buildings. Many of the men in the crowd are wearing their service caps. There are Mario, Josephine, Al and Cely Chiarlanza in the front of Tootsie and Alfonse Crescenzo. Angelo Pacifico is talking to Victor and Viola Pisacano. We stop and stand next to my Uncle Jack McDade, cousin George Moccio and Joe Gulino, as the ceremony begins. The talk given by our local hero was very moving and when the applause ends absolute silence falls over the crowd. The lone trumpeter, James Tamburini begins to play Taps, as Peter Petruzzelli in his full Marine Dress places a wreath in front of the memorial stone. The soldiers fire their rifles into the sky. Looking around at the people in the crowd there are many cheeks covered with tears. The Serpico men and the Mangini brothers are at attention and saluting. The goose bumps on my skin are at least one inch high. The ceremony concludes and we begin to walk home. The pride that I feel today about being an American and

living in this great neighborhood will never diminish. Walking past Mr. Vitale's house on Indiana, I wave to his daughter Mary Ann sitting on the porch, and reflect upon what he told me earlier today. I quietly whisper to myself, "I will never forget what those brave men did for all of us and I will never forget you Mr. Vitale for making me aware of their "ultimate sacrifice". **Spring forward with their memory!!!!!!**