

HONORING OUR COUNTRY'S FALLEN MILITARY SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN

Today, January 4, 2024 I had the privilege to honor one of our fallen WW II US Army Veterans.

Many years ago a friend of mine showed me a shoebox in his basement filled with WW II Army memorabilia from his Uncle . Also included were many items from his Father, a WW II Marine.

Researching his Uncle's story for his Niece, I learned he had served as a PFC with the 126th Regiment, 32 (Red Arrow) Division. While serving as a scout, his patrol was sent to reconnoiter the area near the Mot River in Aitape, New Guinea. During their patrol they encountered a numerically superior Japanese force. PFC John F. Wagner shouted to the rest of his patrol to cross back across the Mot River while he held them off. Standing alone he held the Japanese force at bay with his Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) while his patrol made it safely across the river. PFC Wagner was eventually killed by the Japanese force. His bravery and unwavering courage was reported back to his Company Headquarters.

He was subsequently awarded the Army Distinguished Service Cross documented by US Army Far East Command General Order # 23 under General Douglas MacArthur dated 1944. He now rests in honored glory in the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippine Islands.

So today we had a simple remembrance ceremony at the Milwaukee, WI War Memorial Center to commemorate the 80 years since he was killed . Attendees included War Memorial representatives, PFC Wagner's Niece and her husband, myself and my wife (a WRC member), and PCC Tom Mueller, a noted local historian who helped with PFC Wagner's research.

I am humbly requesting our Brothers and members of the Allied Orders to seek out and find the remaining living WW II Veterans to find out their stories. If you are unable to find any living WW II Veterans, research the Veterans in your family, and friends families. Most of these Veterans are now in their Mid-90's, and soon will be leaving us much like Frank Buckles (WW I) and our honored Civil War Veteran, Albert Woolson.

May the honor and courage of all our Veterans be held dear in our hearts.

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