

OHA HISTORY



AVIATION ORDNANCEMAN THIRD CLASS JAMES E. BENHAM, OF SYRACUSE, FAR RIGHT, A MEMBER OF A U.S. NAVY TORPEDO BOMBER CREW, ON THE FLIGHT DECK OF AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER DURING WORLD WAR II.

Salute a WWII veteran

| BY THOMAS HUNTER

Veterans Day 2015 will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Remaining World War II veterans remember that joyous, yet solemn, occasion when one of the world's most devastating wars ended in 1945. World-wide as many as 80 million people perished, including between 21 million to 25 million military personnel. About 40,000 Onondaga County citizens joined the armed forces, with 1,169 sacrificing their lives. Local veterans discharged their duty with bravery throughout Europe and the Pacific.

Here are just a few of them and their stories: Henry Werts, an Army master sergeant from Syracuse, was a gunner aboard a bomber in Europe. Helen Smith, of Syracuse, was one of many women who joined the Women's Army Corps. Sgt. Albert Tarbell, of Syracuse, a highly decorated paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, jumped into Holland during the Battle of the Bulge. Dom Salvetti, of Solvay, was one of 63 area men who

formed the "All Syracuse Platoon" of Marines in 1942; Salvetti was awarded the Purple Heart while fighting in the Pacific. Army Pvt. Spero Dardaris, of Syracuse, captured by the Japanese in the Philippines in 1942, kept a secret diary he made from used concrete bags until his liberation in 1945. Robert McCord, of Syracuse, a Marine gunnery sergeant, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Outnumbered by the Japanese on the island of Saipan in 1944, McCord, a tank commander, sacrificed his own life after killing 16 enemy soldiers and saving the lives of his tank crew.

World War II veterans are passing away each day. This Veterans Day, say thank you to those who fought against great odds to preserve our freedom. Learn more about local veterans at the Onondaga County War Memorial.

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