



Mr. John A. Sanford

January 7, 1922 - January 17, 2019

John A. Sanford, born in 1922 in Kingston, New York, son of Harold Sanford and Mary Scully, great grandson of Irish immigrants, passed away peacefully on January 17, 2019 at the age of 97. After graduation from high school, he married and enlisted in the Army in 1942.

He served in World War II with the 57th Signal Battalion, participating in the January 22, 1944, invasion of Italy at Anzio, the liberation of Rome, and the invasion of Southern France at St. Raphael on August 15, 1944, and continued through France and into Germany and Austria.

In later years, as the youngest member of his unit, he organized annual reunions of the veterans of the 57th in Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Charleston and at West Point, where they recalled their shared experiences of the war, particularly the months they spent dug in on the beach at Anzio, with the shells coming across every night from the big German guns on the heights above, directed at the supply ships in the harbor, but sometimes landing on nearby foxholes. He re-encountered for the first time since the war the soldier who had stood next to him in the landing craft, and they told the story of the soldier who played the violin while they sped toward shore at Anzio.

He particularly recalled the French town of La Petite-Pierre where the troops were housed in a movie theatre and were entertained by the Mayor's young daughter playing the piano, and the German telephone operators who allowed him to bridge into their lines to avoid having to string cables over a mountain in the Alps.

After the war he worked for the New York Telephone Company, first as a lineman and later as a property claims negotiator until he retired in 1984. Much of his working life was spent in the Catskill Mountains among fields, forests and streams, and he loved being outdoors with animals and birds. His wife of 36 years, Arleen, passed away in 1980, a second marriage ended in divorce.

Later in life he travelled to national parks in the West and, with his brother-in-law, revisited the places in France and Italy where they had both served and had unexpectedly encountered each other during the war.

He lived in Philadelphia, for the last 20 years and was a member of St. Francis de Sales Parish, where in earlier years he volunteered in their school's program for teaching English to recent immigrants. Previously he had volunteered at a New York State prison in their education program.

He is survived by his daughter Deborah and her husband, a grandson, a niece and nephew, and several cousins, and a community of friends at the Atria Center City, where he lived for the last two years. A Funeral Mass will be on Wednesday, January 23 at 10 a.m. in the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter & Paul (Chapel), 17th and the Parkway, Philadelphia, PA, preceded by a viewing from 9 until time of the Mass. Burial will be private. Donations in lieu of flowers may be sent to the Pennsylvania SPCA, 350 E. Erie Ave., Phila., PA 19134 or St. Francis de Sales Church, 4625 Springfield Ave., Phila., PA 19143.

Condolences may also be sent to www.dinanfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. John A. Sanford*

February 03, 2023 at 04:11 AM