

Flag Honors, Russell W. Costa, WWII Army Veteran

During the month of April, the 533rd flag to fly atop the Old Glory Tower in the North End honors Technician 5th Grade (T-5) Russell W. Costa who served in the United States Army from November 28, 1944 to March 11, 1946. Costa served in 715th Amphibious Tractor Battalion and Battery A 743rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion as an amphibian tank crewman during WWII.

According to his Separation Qualification Record, Costa “drove amphibian tank transport personnel and equipment, operated radio to keep in touch with the lead tank, fired machine guns and other armament, inspected engine radio armament for damage and malfunctioning parts, and made minor repairs and adjustments to insure proper operations.”

Russell W. Costa was born on August 28, 1922 and died at the age of 93 on July 11, 2016. He documented his military career through a journal which chronicled his duty assignments.

He was inducted to the U.S. Army on Nov. 28, 1944 and was sent to Fort Devens, MA for duty assignment. He was stationed at Fort Knox, KY for Armored Training camp until April 7, 1945 and then shipped to Fort Mead, MD and onto Camp Kilmer, NJ.

Costa was re-assigned to Camp Stoneman in CA for shipment to the Philippine Islands. Costa shipped out of CA aboard the USS Buckingham Troop Transport for Manila on June 28, 1945. Once he landed in Manila harbor he was sent north to Subic Bay in the Lingayen Gulf.

He joined the 715th Amphibious Tractor Battalion on July 22, 1945, which was attached to the United States Marine Corps. According to Costa, his Battalion was issued all new equipment for the invasion of Japan but he was “sure glad that the war with Japan ended before we were shipped to the Japan Islands.”

Costa was then stationed in San Jose to guard an ammunition dump and then shipped to Manila to guard a prison compound until all the Japanese soldiers were sent home.

According to Costa’s journal he was then transferred to the 743rd AAA before he left Manila, therefore his discharge papers show this unit as his last assignment. Costa left Manila harbor in the Philippines on Feb. 15, 1946 aboard the USS Heintzelman, AP 159 Troop Transport and arrived in San Francisco on March 3, 1946. He was honorably discharged on March 11, 1946.

As a veteran of the U.S. Army, Costa was awarded the Asiatic Pacific Theater Campaign ribbon and the Victory Medal.

Costa resided in New Bedford and Dartmouth, MA for a total of 52 years before moving to Norton, MA. He worked at the former Schmidt Manufacturing Co. in New Bedford as a purchasing agent, then as a custodian for the town of Dartmouth School Department and was later elected as Assessor for the town of

Dartmouth for 10 years before retiring. His wife Dorothy was Treasurer for the town of Dartmouth.

As a member of the American Legion Post #307, Costa was awarded a "Certificate of Continuous Membership" for 60 years of service. He was also a member of the DAV Dr. C.E. Burt Post #7, the Veterans of Foreign Wars #09059, as well as the Quitticus Masonic Lodge.

He was the husband of the late Dorothy F. (Wilcox) Costa and son of the late Ernest and Esther (Johnson) Costa. They had four daughters: Lynda D. Tyler, Carol Lee Costa-Crowell, Rita A. Augustine and Elizabeth J. Magiera, as well as numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren. He was the brother of the late Robert A. Costa, Malcolm Costa and Betty Ann Costa.

The late Joseph Theodore, a World War II veteran and Purple Heart recipient began the practice of flying veterans' flags above the Old Glory Tower 45 years ago.

Linda Ferreira, a marketing representative at Ashley Ford in New Bedford, researches the life histories of area veterans. Shaun Neary, Parts Manager of the dealership, and former Marine, raises the memorial flags on the veterans' behalf. Those who would like to honor a veteran by flying a flag at Old Glory Tower can contact Ferreira at (508) 996-5611 or at marketing@ashleyfordsales.com.