

News Release

Homosassa, FL

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For immediate release

To: Tampa Tribune

Estate of Decorated WWII Veteran Thomas Carr to be Auctioned Saturday

Thomas Carr, was the proud recipient of the BRONZE STAR, PURPLE HEART, OAK LEAF CLUSTER, EUROPEAN AFRICAN MIDDLE EASTERN THEATER RIBBON w/BRONZE ARROWHEAD, FOURRAGERE WWII VICTORY RIBBON, GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL, COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE, EXPERT RIFLE M1, PARACHUTE BADGE .

On September 17, 1944, he jumped with his division 53 miles behind German lines in Holland as part of Operation Market Garden. More than 4700 planes took part in the largest airborne operation in history with more than 1500 fighter escort planes and fighter bombers to protect the paratroopers. Their mission was to capture the two bridges over the Waal River. He was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster for meritorious achievement at Groesbeek and the crossing of the Maas-Waal canal in Holland. He was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic action after his unit held the south end of the railroad bridge in a historic 3 day battle. His unit received the Presidential Citation. This was the only parachute infantry unit with this armored column which captured Nijmegen in house to house fighting and drove a numerically superior German force out of pillboxes, foxholes and prepared trenches. They captured many enemy troops and left the town strewn with burned vehicles and dead Germans. As a member of the wire service, his job was to keep lines of communication open. This operation amounted to 50 days of combat.

He was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded by tree blasts during the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes forest. He was walking between 2 other men when they were hit. The other 2 men were killed. He said both men were the sons of preachers and he often wondered why they died and he didn't. He doesn't remember being issued proper boots for the snow until much later. He spent most of his time walking in the snow to keep the lines of communication open and suffered severe frostbite to his feet and legs as there was never anytime to let his boots dry. He was treated by medics and chose to return to C.P. as he said it was just as cold back there and he could operate the switchboard even if he couldn't walk. He went from private to 1st Sgt. of HQ's 2nd BN after this action. During another battle, he saw a German Tiger Royal tank blow up a truck load of men with the corp. of engineers. He found a German bazooka and crawled through the snow until he was able to shoot the tank in the turret and disable it. He doesn't remember anything after that and woke up in a hospital in Belgium where he was being treated for infections in his toes caused from the frostbite. Our government does not award a Purple Heart for frostbite but he was told he would receive a Silver Star for his action. That never happened and he just assumed the records never made it out.

In one town, which he could not remember the name, they were under heavy fire and the English were called in to help. An English tank rolled in beside him where he had taken cover and fired right over his head. He said he thought it blew his head apart and he did suffer damage to his ear drum. After the Germans were on the run, he said he would never forget seeing the English soldier climb down out of the tank and crawl around the back to make himself a cup of tea.

After the war was over, he returned to West Virginia without much fanfare and returned to the automotive repair and service station he owned before he went into the service. He was so amazed that it wasn't until the movie "Saving Private Ryan" came out that younger people became aware of

WW II. He started wearing an Airborne cap and received many handshakes and thanks for his effort to keep America free. He finally got the opportunity to realize that what he went through was appreciated after all.

When he wasn't busy in his shop, he was enjoying boating, fishing, and scuba diving. Over the years, he taught many local residents how to scuba dive.

If you wanted something special made from metal, plastic, or wood, Tommy Carr of Carr Enterprises in Homosassa was your go to man. He was a designer, machinist, and craftsman who worked in his business right up until his death, July 16, 2009, at the age of 87.

His shop has just about every type of fabricating machine you could ever need to do any of the jobs he was so adept at doing for local business people. All will be sold Saturday at public auction including a 1987 Thomas bus that he was in the process of converting to a motor home when he became too ill to work on it.

For auction information, visit www.kincaid.com.

For more information contact:

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