

Fort Taber Flag In New Bedford To Honor Thomas Tripp Cary WWII American Hero

During the month of January, the 41st Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of Thomas Tripp Cary, of South Dartmouth, who served in the United States Army's 21st Armored Infantry Battalion of the 11th Armored Division during WWII.

Cary was born in Fairhaven, MA, the son of the late Floyd Francis Cary and Anna Tripp Cary. He attended the Moses Brown School located in Providence, RI. Upon graduation, Cary was inducted into the United States Army on July 7, 1943, in Fort Devens, MA.

He was assigned to the United States Army's 21st Armored Infantry Battalion (AIB) of the 11th Armored Division. He was trained in weapons qualifications earning his Sharpshooter, Rifle, Expert, Gunner Combat Infantry Badge. During his military career, Cary served in Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe.

According to his obituary, Cary landed on the beaches of Normandy, just days after the initial invasion. Cary's division, landed on Omaha Beach in Wave 2 and according to his family, if asked, he would say "the guys in Wave 1 were the brave ones."

His division later deployed to Belgium, where he was part of a tank battalion assigned to attack the advancing German forces during the Battle of Bulge, in which he received the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in combat.

He completed his military service on March 31, 1946, earning the Good Conduct Medal, the Victory Medal, the European

African Middle Eastern Theatre Campaign Ribbon and the American Theatre Campaign Ribbon.

According to his obituary, Cary "received commendations for bravery and sacrifice, including the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. Despite these acknowledgements for valor, Mr. Cary dismissed his own military service and was humbled by those who gave their lives for their country."

Upon completing his military service, Cary attended Brown University and graduated with a degree in the Bachelor of Arts. He was employed by Aerovox, a major manufacturer of capacitors and other electrical components, located in New Bedford. He retired from Gerber Sales, an electronics distributor with headquarters in Needham, MA.

Over the years, Cary shared stories with his family about his war experiences, "particularly the time his battalion was ordered to investigate Mauthausen, one of the Nazi's largest internment camps." The 11th Armored Division was recognized as a liberating unit by the US Army's Center of Military History and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1985.

"After the outbreak of war, people from across Europe were deported to Mauthausen, which gradually developed into a system of several interconnected camps. During this phase, Mauthausen and Gusen were the concentration camps with the harshest imprisonment conditions and the highest mortality," according to the website mauthausen-memorial.org.

"On 5 May 1945 the US Army reached Gusen and Mauthausen. Of a total of around 190,000 people imprisoned in the Mauthausen concentration camp and its subcamps over seven years, at least 90,000 died." According to Cary's son, Peter Cary, his father shared with him that he "was part of a small group under Patton that scouted and ultimately liberated the concentration camp at Mauthausen (Austria)"

Thomas Tripp Cary died on January 22, 2013 at the age of 88

years old. He is survived by his daughters, Sarah Cary Lemelin and her husband Michael; Martha Cary Shuster and her husband Steven, both of South Dartmouth; his son, Peter Gifford Cary and his wife Maureen of Dover, MA; eight grandchildren, John Cary Shuster and his wife Whitney of South Natick, MA. and Molly Shuster Otacka and her husband Edward Otacka of Duxbury; Sarah Ross Lemelin of Tewksbury, MA; Anne Cary Lemelin of New Orleans, LA; Andrew Francis Cary of Newton, MA, Grace Montgomery Cary of Los Angeles, Claire Haddorff Cary of Austin, TX and Samuel Tripp Cary of Dover, MA; and six great-grandchildren..

He was predeceased by his wife, Joan Howard Cary and two sisters, Janet Cary Sipp and Barbara Cary Ferguson.

His son Peter explains that his father brought home many artifacts including a Nazi youth dress helmet, Nazi flags, battlefield maps and a Walther P38 handgun that he told him he had taken from a Nazi. His father explained that the “only reason we are here” is because the Nazi apparently died by his own gun. Peter has the authorization signed by the commanding officer, dated Feb 2, 1946, allowing his father ‘to retain them as his personal property’.

Linda Ferreira, of **Empire Ford of New Bedford**, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford of New Bedford. Flags are raised by the staff at Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum. Those who would like to honor a local veteran in the future can contact Ferreira at lferreira@buyempireautogroup.com.