



VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

RALPH J. OSTERHOUDT, SR.

Ralph J. Osterhoudt, Sr. is a distinguished World War II veteran known for his lifelong dedication to his community and country.

At the age of 15, Mr. Osterhoudt joined the Ground Observer Corps, a WWII-era Civil Defense program under the United States Army Air Force. He became part of a dedicated group of local civilian volunteers entrusted to monitor the skies over the Hudson Valley, with the critical task of reporting potential enemy aircraft sightings to the Roosevelt Estate in Hyde Park, home to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1944, during his senior year at F.D.R. High School, he was drafted into the United States Army to serve his country in World War II. He deployed first to Scotland and later to France and Germany as part of the 575th Field Artillery Battalion.

Mr. Osterhoudt's courage and fortitude were exemplified in many instances, including through his heroic role as one of the first 30 liberators of Auschwitz. He and his unit played a pivotal role in the Battle of the Bulge; their mission included shelling Nazi bridges and fuel supplies as they endured relentless bombardment and traveled dangerous terrain.

For his bravery and heroism, Mr. Osterhoudt was awarded the French Medal of Honor, three Bronze Star Medals, and the Purple Heart.

After returning home to Staatsburg, Mr. Osterhoudt used his skills in electrical engineering, developed during his time in the Army, to start Osterhoudt Electric, providing a needed service in his community.

As an active member of the American Legion Post 1303, his commitment to his fellow veterans has remained steadfast. At the age of 97, he continues to participate in Memorial Day and Veterans Day events and serves as Senior Board Member for the military charity Mended Swords. Mr. Osterhoudt advocated against the closure of Castle Point VA Medical Center in Wappingers Falls, championing the preservation of vital veterans' healthcare services. His efforts to amplify veterans' stories and commemorate the fallen are a testament to his enduring patriotism.

A lifelong resident of Staatsburg, Mr. Osterhoudt exemplifies the essence of service, from his heroic contributions during WWII to his lifelong commitment to his community and fellow veterans.



RALPH J. OSTERHOUDT, SR. WAS SELECTED AS A
2023 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY
SENATOR MICHELLE HINCHEY.

2023