



VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

HENRY ROSS

Henry Ross served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II as a Tech Sergeant.

Referred to as “Uncle Hank,” he served from 1943 to 1945 as a Radio Operator and a Side Waist Gunner on board a B-24 Liberator. Following six months of boot camp and basic training, he was assigned to the 450th Bombardment Group H of the 721st Squadron based in Manduria, Italy.

Mr. Ross bravely survived 50 bombing missions flown over hostile skies that were heavily protected by anti-aircraft guns throughout Italy, France, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Germany. To this day, Mr. Ross has a piece of flak stuck in his shoulder, but it hasn't slowed him down in all his years. He received the Purple Heart Award for his injury, and also received the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters, the Good Conduct Medal, and many ribbons for his flight missions during World War II.

Recently celebrating his 100th birthday on May 16 of this year, Mr. Ross grew up in Rochester, New York, where he was one of nine siblings – and one of four brothers to serve during the War. He was drafted in January 1943 and sent to Miami Beach for boot camp. To become a Tech Sergeant, he went to Panama City for gunnery training, then to Pueblo, Colorado for B-24 training and crew assignment. After completing 50 missions overseas, he was assigned to the Air Transport stateside, which was a training facility for pilots and radio operators.

Following his service, he married his sweetheart, Melba Rae Starwald, and had two children, Diane and Bob. Mr. Ross went on to receive an Associate degree through the Rochester Institute of Technology, and then worked in the electronics field in New York and, eventually, Indiana. He retired to Florida and lived there for many years, before returning to New York approximately 10 years ago.

Despite dropping out of East High School as a teenager in 1942 to help support his family, Mr. Ross earned his diploma 75 years later at the age of 93 after finishing his last course. The School hosted a special program to mark the occasion, and Mr. Ross was able to share encouraging words with the 133 members of the Class of 2017 at the School's 114th commencement ceremony.

Mr. Ross currently lives in and maintains his own home in the Village of Hilton.



HENRY ROSS WAS SELECTED AS A
2024 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY
SENATOR ROBERT G. ORTT.

2024