



# VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

## JOHN CORTESE

John Cortese was born on June 19, 1924 in Brooklyn. Since his mother was expectant with him on the voyage over from Italy, he would always say that he was made in Italy but born in the United States of America. He spent his early years in Prospect Heights and Park Slope but when his parents opened The Golden Gate Fancy Fruits and Vegetables at 2080 Flatbush Avenue in 1939, Flatlands was his home.

In 1942, after Mr. Cortese graduated from high school, Uncle Sam recruited him for the United States Army. He trained at Fort Bragg and then on to fight in World War II. As a Corporal in the 551<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, he landed on Omaha Beach as part of the D-Day invasion. He also fought in The Battle of The Bulge and served in England, France, Germany and Belgium.

After the war ended in 1945, Mr. Cortese returned home to his beloved Brooklyn. There he married the love of his life, Anne DeSantis and together they raised three children. Settling in St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, he was active in the Holy Name Society and was an usher at Sunday mass for many years.

Besides his family, his other love is the Golden Gate where he enjoys spending his days and has transformed the Golden Gate to a showcase of how to live and enjoy people. He loves what he does – interacting with customers who have become his friends. He can be found singing to the sounds of American standards and talking about World War II and Brooklyn's good old days.

He has flown with other World War II Veterans on the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. He has spoken about his World War II experiences at the Italian American Museum in New York City and he has received many citations for all he has done for his country and his community.

Mr. Cortese passed away on April 19, 2020. He is survived by his children, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.



*JOHN CORTESE IS BEING HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY  
AS A 2020 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE  
BY SENATOR ANDREW GOUNARDES.*

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