



# VETERANS

★★★ HALL OF FAME ★★★

## OSCEOLA LOUIS FLETCHER

Osceola Louis Fletcher was inducted into the United States Army. He served during World War II and achieved the rank of Technician Grade 5 (T5).

During the War, Mr. Fletcher was a Crane Operator, where he loaded ships with supplies. Shortly after D-Day, he was sent to the shores of Normandy. While struggling through the sea of debris from that history-making day, his legs were badly wounded trying to reach the shore.

He was wounded again when a truck he was in came under enemy fire. The soldiers in the cab were killed, the truck rolled into a ditch, and Mr. Fletcher was ejected from the back of the truck. He was knocked unconscious and sustained a large gash to his head; the scar is still visible today. Often, when minorities were injured, they were patched up and sent back to work - such was the case for Mr. Fletcher.

After returning from World War II, he completed his undergraduate studies under the GI Bill. He began his career as a Patrolman in the police department, rising in the ranks to Detective, and then Sergeant of the Narcotics Squad. He earned two Master's degrees from New York University during his 24 years on the force,

Mr. Fletcher began a second career as a high school English teacher at Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn, and was a respected mentor to students.

Tireless in his desire to improve civic affairs in his neighborhood, he was elected to his Community School Board and served on the Board of Directors at Unity Hospital. Mr. Fletcher also helped forge productive relationships between minority communities and law enforcement.

An American hero and Renaissance man, Mr. Fletcher was presented with the Sloan Public Service Award for his commitment far beyond the call of duty. Beloved by many, he was recognized for his ingenuity and resourcefulness. He retired in 2014 at the age of 92.

Over the past 20 years, he began talking about his Army experiences. He knew he earned the Purple Heart and wanted the same honor and respect for his wounds that White military personnel received. He also felt that he and other minorities were promised the Legion of Honor while they were in France, but it never materialized.

When interviewed for a *New York Daily News* article, he was given the opportunity to tell his story, at the age of 97, which started a chain of events. He appeared in a short film recounting his experiences, titled the "Sixth of June."

Mr. Fletcher's story alerted those in the military, and the campaign to recognize him properly began. On April 16, 2021, after 76 years, Mr. Fletcher was awarded the Purple Heart. In addition, on February 17, at the age of 100, he was awarded the French Legion of Honor for his efforts and sacrifice in liberating France during World War II.



OSCEOLA LOUIS FLETCHER WAS SELECTED AS  
A 2022 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY  
**SENATOR ZELLNOR Y. MYRIE.**

2022