

# the GēDUNK

GROVE CITY COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Spring 2015



## FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

Seventy years later, alumni veterans of World War II share their stories as we commemorate their amazing achievements and selfless sacrifice.

**NEWS:** THEATER PROGRAM HAS KENNEDY CENTER FESTIVAL AUDIENCE SEEING *RED*

**ALUMNI:** GCC SERVES PROVIDES A GREAT WAY FOR GROVERS TO GIVE BACK

**SPORTS:** SMITH TO BOW OUT AFTER 2015 SEASON, DIDONATO NAMED SUCCESSOR

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

*"I settled down in my bedroll, shielding my flashlight from the others so I could read my G.I. issued prayer book. You really learn how to pray in this situation. Little did I dream that in just five days, 4,000 of these well-trained soldiers would be dead, captured or maimed for life."*

Those are the words of my father, Joseph McNulty, taken from a short memoir he wrote about his combat experience in World War II.

My father was an extraordinarily kind and courageous man who left this world for his heavenly rest on Christmas Eve 2003. On Dec. 12, 1944, he was on the front line in Belgium with the nearly 16,000 fresh troops of the newly formed 99<sup>th</sup> Army division, known as the "Battle Babies." Five days later, the 99<sup>th</sup> withstood the brunt of a seasoned German army in a massive attack known to history as "The Battle of the Bulge." Joe survived the heaviest fighting at the height of the battle, but he was seriously wounded weeks later as the Allies began their push into Germany.

In January of 2008, I had a business trip to Dusseldorf, Germany. Realizing that the rural Belgian countryside, the site of the epic battle, was not far from where I would be, I brought my father's memoir with me. With the help of a GPS, I managed to retrace his harrowing journey through that region in the snowy winter of '44 and '45. In the early evening of this emotional day, I drove into the small village of Krinkelt and parked my rented car along a quiet street. I paused to read these words from the memoir: *"By this time it was getting dark and the church steeple in the village of Krinkelt stood out like a beacon."*

I then walked a short distance through a cold, soft rain to the town square. With the church steeple to my back and my eyes filled with tears, I read the memorial stone in the center of the square: "This monument stands in honor of members of the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and attached units who gallantly served, and those who died, for freedom and in the name of liberty during World War II in Europe. It is a memorial commemorating their service to mankind."

My father had dreamed of visiting this memorial, and now I was there.

Joe McNulty survived the war, married a beautiful gal from Pittsburgh, and together they raised four children. He and I visited Grove City College during my senior year of high school. From that first visit to graduation day in 1980, my father's affection for the school grew stronger and stronger. I often think about how thankful this humble man would be to see his son become president of this great College he so admired. I long to be reunited in glory with my father and son, my two Joes.

For now, however, we press on to honor the sacrifice of those who fought for our freedom. The apostle Paul reminds us that our spiritual freedom was bought with a price: Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Similarly, our earthly freedom has been secured at great cost. This is a primary reason why we say "Freedom Matters" at Grove City College. We cherish our heritage of liberty, and we strive to communicate to our students and the world that our great calling is to preserve and advance that freedom using the gifts of wisdom and knowledge.

On behalf of the entire College community, I salute the thousands of men and women in the extended Grove City College family who have fought for our freedom.



Paul J. McNulty '80  
President

A monument in Krinkelt, Belgium honors the "Battle Babies" of the 99th Infantry Division.



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### WRITE US, PLEASE

Intense use of email has made letter-writing a lost art. Formal letters to the editor that used to be a regular feature of our magazine are rare, now, as most readers are content to send a brief email and we respond directly to that reader and share the comments internally. We'd like to revive our letters section, but we need your help. Your feedback is very important to our editorial staff and we encourage you to register your comments, questions, concerns and even compliments. Our mailing address is The GeDUNK, 100 Campus Drive, Grove City PA, 16127-2104, but there's no need to put pen to paper or stamp to envelope, we'll be happy to hear what you think via email at [alumni@gcc.edu](mailto:alumni@gcc.edu). Please indicate that your letter is intended for publication and include a phone number so we can confirm.



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