

John R. Love, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division May 1944 to December 1944, Receives French Legion of Honor for his Combat Service in France

On 2 April 2011 Mr. John R. Love of Freeport, Pennsylvania was awarded the French Legion of Honor by Honorary Consul of the French Republic Mr. Jean-Dominique Le Garrec. The medal was presented at a small ceremony in Mr. Love's lovely home with family members in attendance to witness the grand event.

John R. Love reported to the 3rd Infantry Division while it breaking out of the Anzio beach head at the end of May 1944, and was with A Company, 15th Infantry when the unit moved into Rome on 4 June. He moved with his company to a training area outside Naples later in June in preparation for the invasion of Southern France. John landed with his company on the beach near Ramatuelle, France on 15 August and fought with his regiment up the Rhone Valley until he contracted malaria. After his recovery he returned to his regiment but due to combat losses in C Company, 15th Infantry he was reassigned to that unit for the remainder of his combat service.

John continued fighting along with his company as the 3rd Infantry Division continued its drive to the north, and as it entered the Vosges Mountains in mid-September. Along with his company John fought through the very difficult terrain of the Vosges and the awful weather until he arrived in the vicinity of the Colmar Pocket. During severe winter combat there his unit was surrounded by the Germans and it took several days until he and his comrades were rescued.

Unfortunately John and several of his comrades had developed severe cases of frozen feet and he was medically evacuated, eventually returning to the United States on a military hospital ship for treatment in Texas. Once he recovered he was stationed at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, and remained there until honorably discharged in January 1946.

Prior to pinning the prestigious medal on John, Consul Le Garrec read the history of the Legion of Honor medal, which was instituted by Napoleon in 1802 to recognize services of great merit rendered to France. He also presented John with the impressive certificate which accompanies the Legion of Honor medal.

Monika and Tim Stoy represented the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division and the 15th Infantry Regiment Association at the ceremony, and Monika presented Consul La Garrec with a certificate of appreciation from Outpost Europe of the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division. She also presented a certificate to John in recognition of his outstanding combat service in Europe in WWII. Monika helped John in the preparation and processing of the award packet.

Mrs. Roberta Love, John's wife, was a gracious hostess and prepared a grand spread of delicacies for all guests.

All honorably discharge WWII veterans who fought in France are eligible for the French Legion of Honor, but they must apply to the French government for consideration. Any 3ID WWII veteran interested in pursuing this award, please contact Monika Stoy.