



April 2023 Stratford Veterans Museum VETERANS OF THE MONTH



MASTRONI FAMILY



PFC. ROBERT MASTRONI

78th Artillery, 105 Howitzer, U.S. Army, Germany 1959-60

Robert served in the 78th Artillery with a 105 howitzer crew with U.S. Forces stationed in Germany during the Cold War. These forces were part of NATO and were stationed in Europe as a deterrent to any offensive moves by the Soviet Union. Bob was the 3rd brother to serve in the military, following a tradition started by his dad in World War I

The 78th Artillery was constituted on 1 July 1916 and organized 1 June 1917 at Fort Riley, Kansas. The 20th Cavalry was formed from elements of the 13th Cavalry. Such a lineage is enshrined in the unit crest, the numeral 13 in the blazing sun. In November 1917, the 20th Cavalry was re-designated and reformed as the 78th Field Artillery Regiment and assigned to support the 6th Infantry Division. On the crest's wreath of red and gold, the 6 pointed star charged with the number 78 represents the 6th Infantry's insignia and its relationship to the Regiment. Battle participation in Europe was limited and the regiment was inactivated following World War I. The field of the unit crest is red for Artillery. The gold billets are from the coat of arms of Franche-Comté, the area where the 78th Field Artillery Regiment was located during World War I. Beneath the crest is a Scroll with the motto SEMEL ET SIMUL meaning "At Once and Together".

ANTONIO MASTRONIANNI

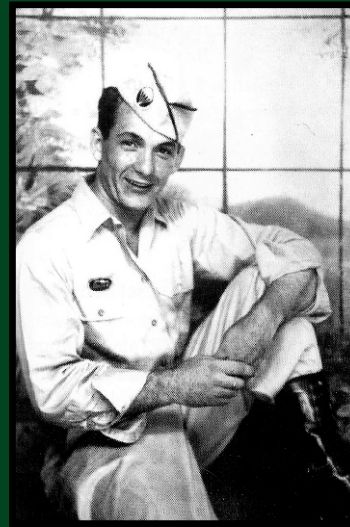


American Expedition Force Infantry/Musician 3rd Class WWI Antonio was part of the American Expeditionary Force under General Pershing that went to France in 1918 to assist the Allies in their battle against German forces. He was wounded by shrapnel July 28, 1918 during the set up phase of the Argonne offensive, and would later receive the Purple Heart

He served from March 30th, 1918 to 1920.

The Meuse-Argonne offensive was a major part of the final Allied offensive of World War I that stretched along the entire Western Front. It was fought from September 26, 1918 until the Armistice of November 11, 1918, a total of 47 days. The Meuse-Argonne offensive was the largest in United States military history, involving 1.2 million American soldiers. It is also the deadliest battle in the history of the United States Army, resulting in over 350,000 casualties, including 28,000 German lives, 26,277 American lives and an unknown number of French lives. American losses were worsened by the inexperience of many of the troops, the tactics used during the early phases of the operation, and the widespread onset of the global influenza outbreak called the "Spanish flu".

It was one of a series of Allied attacks, known as the Hundred Days Offensive, which brought the war to an end.



GEORGE "LEFTY" MASTRONI

U.S. Army Airborne 221st Medical Company WWII

George was inducted on April 6, 1943 and served with the 221st Airborne Medical Company in the Southwest Pacific Theater of Operations for six months. He drove jeeps, ambulances and light trucks and was a Medic. He also maintained and serviced vehicles

by making minor repairs and greasing and oiling them as needed.

"Lefty" received the Asiatic Pacific Theater Campaign Ribbon and American Theater Campaign Ribbon Victory medal. He drove vehicles to haul personnel, equipment and supplies. George brought ambulances to areas where paratroopers were jumping to aid those who were injured in unsuccessful jumps. He was honorably discharged on March 5, 1946.

PFC WILLIAM MASTRONIANNI



8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division

Member of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He was killed in action while fighting the enemy near Taegu, South Korea on Sept. 6, 1950. He was born and raised in Stratford, Connecticut.

This following was written by William's brother Bob:

"Billy was my brother. I was 8 years old when I last saw him. Handsome in his Army uniform he was leaving to go to a place called Korea. My memories of him are like snapshots, fleeting glimpse of his life. I hardly knew him...mischievous I'm told

"It was a cool September evening in 1950. What I do remember is my mother's deep abiding grief, seeing the tears and listening to her anguished sobs... and not knowing or understanding why. My father had died from an illness called ALS. While making funeral arrangements a telegram arrived from the war department 'Killed in Action' in Korea. My brother was dead. So much sadness around me. I know I should grieve, I know I should cry, but I never shed a tear and I've been guilt ridden ever since.

"Billy was a teenager when he died. Had he lived he would be in his 80s. What I do mourn is never knowing what could have been his life. How many lives would he have touched? Who would he have inspired? How many memories would he have been a part of? He was denied the chance to be a dad, and an Uncle Billy and eventually a 'Pop-Pop.'

"He never had the opportunity to have a life ... a life that most certainly would have made a difference, so that in the end, tears would be shed for him.

"It has always been a source of great comfort to me that my mother choose to bury my brother in Stratford instead of Arlington Cemetery in Virginia. It gives me a chance to visit him and outwardly express my deepest regrets. 'I wish I had gotten to know you,' I tell him."