

STAFF SERGEANT JOSEPH J. TOYE
101ST AIRBORNE EASY COMPANY

WHEN?
1919--1995

WHERE? European
Theater of War



EVENT
World War II in Europe

VOCABULARY
D-Day Bronze star
Silver Star
paratrooper

On January 1st the Germans made their last major bombing raid of the war. They bombed our front lines. Joe caught a piece of shrapnel in his arm. Joe had just won his third Purple Heart. I saw him crossing the field from the hospital tent with his arm in a sling. I stopped him and said, "Joe, you don't have to go back on the line with one arm. Why don't you take it easy for a couple of days?" I'll never forget his answer. He replied, "I want to get back to my buddies. (Excerpt from Major Richard Winters eulogy for Joe Toye.)

"The toughest of the tough" as Joe Toye was known, was born on Rock Street in Hughestown, Pennsylvania. Toye was born on March 14, 1919 to Peter and Beatrice McTighue Toye. Times were financially difficult for the family during the 1930s depression and by the time Toye was a junior in high school, he had to quit school in order to help support his family by working in the mines. That changed when Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. He signed up for the Army on December 11 (Fandom).

Since the paratroopers offered more money, Toye accepted that and signed up for the unit. He was shipped to Camp Toccoa in Georgia for training. Easy Company in the 506th Parachute Infantry 101st Airborne became his new home and family. They would continue their training in England before what would become the largest amphibious assault on Fortress Europe in the war.

The landing during D-Day required the paratroopers to fly under cover of darkness during the early morning hours of June 6, 1944. Flights had been taken for weeks over the landing zones to get the Germans used to hearing the sound of planes. Nonetheless, this night the sky was filled with flak and machine gun bullets that downed planes and shot men as they floated down. Toye's hand was entangled in his cord which severely injured him even before he was able to find his whole unit (Fandom).



During the ensuing weeks, Toye managed to escape severe injury or death from two different grenades as the unit took heavy fire fighting the Germans. When he was wounded in an artillery bombardment during Operation Market Garden, he was sent back to England to recuperate. He, like many other men from the unit, hurried back to be with their friends. He made it back in time to be with his unit at Bastogne. The winter weather was brutal as were the

German attacks. The unit had been hurried into position and didn't have the proper winter clothing nor did they have ample provisions of ammunition, food, or medical supplies. At one point, Toye was caught in an artillery barrage where he was hit by a shell and lost his right leg below the knee. His friend Wild Bill Guernere tried to pull him to safety but, he too, was hit and lost his leg. Their story can be seen in the movie *Band of Brothers* (S1 E6) with actor Kirk Acevedo playing Joe Toye.

Toye was wounded in Holland and at Bastogne where he lost his leg. He spent nine months in hospitals recuperating from his wounds (veterans). He earned four Purple Hearts, 2 combat jumps, combat infantry Badge, good conduct medal, a Silver Star and a Bronze Star.

Married twice and the father of four children: Anita, Jonathan, Peter, Steven with seven grandchildren he lived in Reading after the war working as a drill bit grinder. He retired from Bethlehem Steel. He died from cancer in 1995 and is buried in Gethsemane Cemetery in Laureldale.

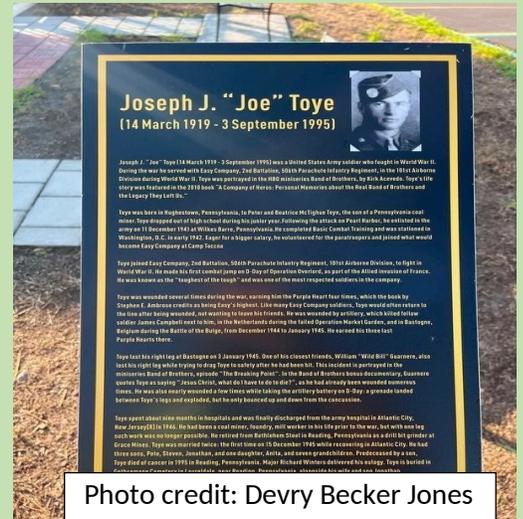


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ONLINE RESOURCES

[Fandom Joe Toye](#)

[Historical Marker Toye](#)

[Jake Wynn Public Historian Toye](#)

[Toye in his own words](#)

[Veterans Funeral Care Toye](#)