



## John L. O'Leary

April 23, 1924 - April 25, 2013

John L. O'Leary, beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, went home on April 25, 2013 suddenly and peacefully. He was born in West Lynn MA on April 23, 1924. He was preceded in death by sisters Marian Spellman, Alice Bermingham, Ann O'Leary, Martha O'Toole, brother Eugene O'Leary, and his parents, Eugene and Alice O'Leary. Others who preceded him in death were his first wife, Mildred Edwards O'Leary, and his second wife Rose Friswell O'Leary. He graduated from Lynn Classical High School in 1942 and after taking the Army Alpha was placed in engineering school by the Army. He was removed from the college program along with all of his friends and was sent to Basic training again in Louisiana. They were all sent to England in Fall 1944 and were placed in the front lines of the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. All of his friends and acquaintances except for Billy Lumpkin, his BAR man, were either killed or wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. Jack O'Leary took a German mortar through the chest on Jan 10, 1945. He was 19 and not expected to live, so he was kept in a field hospital for a long time. When he refused to die, the medics finally evacuated him out of the triage tent and sent him to a safer location, including a hotel in Paris and numerous hospitals in England and Scotland. He arrived in the US on VE day, but was considered too ill to participate in the parties. While at Walter Reed, he broadcasted for the Army Hour NBC and met Mildred Edwards. He was released from Walter Reed in November 1945. After is DAV discharge, he gave talks to civil and religious groups in Lynn and the war.

Jack O'Leary married Mildred Edwards in June 1947 and went to the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis. He graduated with honors in 1949 and went into optometry practice in New Bedford, MA. In his spare time, he was active in the VFW and Knights of Columbus. He also acted in radio plays and was a valued member of the local Little Theater. Jack moved his family to Jacksonville, FL in the mid-1950's and went to work for New York Life Insurance. He earned his CLU and was moved into a management position. This promotion required moving to a variety of cities. He spent 2 years in New Orleans, where the whole family enjoyed entertaining his agents in his home. His next assignment was Beaumont, TX. While in Beaumont, he became a civil rights leader. This was an intensely unpopular thing to do in East Texas in the 1960's, so he was transferred to Amarillo in 1970. After 2 years in Amarillo, he was hired by MONY for their Coral Gables office. He was thrilled to be able to use his boat to do salt-water fishing again.

His beloved wife Mildred died in 1979 and he retired soon after her death. He busied himself with fishing, traveling, bridge, running singles groups, going to parties at the Coral Gables Country Club, and doing substitute teaching in the Miami public schools. He served as a host on a 20-day Panama Canal cruise, as dancing, bridge, and conversation were a major part of his skill set. He taught himself the organ and played at a variety of custodial care facilities. Jack loved South Miami and made a lot of friends there. He continuously went to parties and dances. He met Rose Friswell in Miami and they married in 1992. They moved to Palm City FL soon after their wedding. Rose was diagnosed with ALS just 3 years into their marriage and Jack took care of her every day and night until she died in 1997. Jack had many friends in Palm City and went dancing about 3 nights a week but moved to San Antonio TX in 2003 to be near his family.

During his years in San Antonio, he was very active at the JCC, the Helotes Senior Center, and a variety of other organizations. He moved to Patriot Heights in 2011 and became involved in the University United Methodist Church. At that time, he also began studying the Bible. He taught bridge at a

variety of places and played bridge the day that he passed away. As for Jack's personality, he was very intelligent, generous, gregarious, loyal to his friends over the decades, and all people were equal in his sight. His integrity was above reproach and he judged all people as the Lord would judge them. He recognized talent, drive, and ability in others and always attempted to nurture it. Jack was honest and let you know what he was thinking. He had a witty sense of humor and his storytelling ability an ethnic Irish trait was amazing. He had friends from all cultures and backgrounds and actively enjoyed unusual people. Basically, he was a force of nature. Jack made a decision to never discuss the details of the Battle of the Bulge with anyone. If anyone commented on his scars, he would say, "yup, it's a gift from the Germans " and the conversation ended. At some point after 2003, he figured out that everyone who really knew the truth was dead, memory-impaired, or almost dead. He agreed to be interviewed by Voices of Veterans for their oral history project. His 3 hour account of his wartime experiences is online at the Voices of Veterans website. It is harrowing but historically interesting. Jack was raised in church and rarely missed a Sunday or Holy Day. He knew for a fact that he would be with his loved ones after he was finished with his earthly body. His survivors include daughter and son-in-law Pat and James F. Crane, grandchild and husband Kelly Deidre Woolley and Brandon Cellic Woolley, his Friswell grandchildren, great-grandchildren Keira Deidre and Brody Cellic Woolley and grand-dog Justin Crane. Jack also leaves behind his brother Timothy O'Leary and dozens of nieces, nephews, grandnieces and nephews, numerous cousins, Charlie Forward of Newfoundland, and at least 30 cousins in County Cork, Ireland. Jack will be sorely missed by everyone he touched. The local memorial service will be held in the chapel of Patriot Heights 5000 Fawn Meadow, zip 78240 at 6:30 pm on Thursday May 2, 2013. We will celebrate his life and give thanks to God for him. Jack is going home to Lynn MA for his wake, funeral, military honors, burial next to his parents and his post-funeral feast. Cuffe-McGinn of Lynn MA will be handling all events on

May 6 and 7. Anyone wishing to send flowers may contact Welch Florist at 781 595 8222. Anyone wishing to honor his memory in any other way may send a donation to the Center for The Intrepid. Special thanks to Nellie Faye Davies of Patriot Heights, Mark O'Toole of the Lynn Police department, and Jake Hill of Boston and Nashville. We love you, Jack.