

## War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: John A. Brattoli

Current home town: Elyria

Age: Not given

### The 40's – A Family In Transition

As the 40's began, our family of 13 (father, Michael, an immigrant from Italy, mother Lucy, born in Brooklyn, New York to Italian immigrants, seven boys and four girls, ranging in age from 3 to 23) was hoping for better times since we had survived the depression of the 30's. But our hopes were not to be fulfilled because of the fateful event on December 7, 1941. By 1942 the three oldest sons had been drafted: Joseph into the Air Force, serving as a mechanic stationed in England; Steven into the Army, serving as a medical technician in North Africa, Sicily and Italy; and Dan into the army and transferring to the Air Force, serving as a combat pilot in the South Pacific.

Because of financial needs, our father had temporarily left the family to acquire a job at the Bendix Corporation in Elyria, OH. He would return shortly thereafter for spinal surgery at a Columbus, OH, hospital. They put a body cast on him and sent him home, where he was bedridden for about six months. During that time, the family's only source of income was a portion of Steve's army pay.

After his recuperation, our father returned to his job in Elyria. In late summer 1943, the family packed up and moved to Elyria to join him. Of course, it meant living in a rented home and the children enrolling in new school situations with a larger pupil population than they had experienced in New Lexington, OH. Many neighborhood and school friends had been left behind and new friendships had to be formed.

The fourth oldest son, John, was drafted into the Army, serving in Belgium and Germany, where he was wounded in action. Brother Tony quit high school and enlisted in the army, serving as a paratrooper in the occupation Army in Japan.

Sister Clara married during the war and gave birth to a physically handicapped son. Nonetheless, her husband was drafted into the army. Sister Mary married her boyfriend just before he was deployed overseas. Unfortunately, he was killed in action in Germany. Sister Anne married a navy veteran after the war. By late 1945 the four oldest boys had returned home. Joseph came home with his English war bride. Dan came home to the wife he had married just before deployment to the South Pacific. Steven came home unmarried. John returned in November after recuperating in army hospitals over a period of six months.

The three oldest boys went to work in the construction industry, Joe and Dan as carpenters and Steve as a brick layer. When Tony returned, he also went to work as a carpenter. John, after a year as a clerk with a war assets disposal company, enrolled in John Carrol University, where by 1950, he obtained a bachelor's degree with a major in commercial teaching.