

Joseph Phillip Cagney

U.S. Army

96th Infantry Division, 381st Regiment, Company K



Joseph Phillip Cagney
Army Infantry— 96th Division,
381st Regiment, Company K

Joseph Phillip Cagney was born on August 10, 1924, and lived in Oak Park, a suburb due west of Chicago's Loop. Since his father's name was also Joseph he was known as Phil by his family and friends. He graduated from Ascension Grade School in 1938, Fenwick High School in 1942 and that Fall enrolled in Notre Dame's school of engineering.

Shortly after he completed his freshman year at Notre Dame, Phil received his orders to report for induction and in July 1942 was transported to Camp Grant, near Rockport, Illinois. There he received his uniforms, including size 12 \hat{A} $\frac{1}{2}$ B shoes, and his orders to report for basic training at the Army's Camp Fannin, near Tyler, Texas. He was most proud of the two expert sharpshooter medals received for his time on the firing range. During his tenure at Camp Fannin Joe, as he was now called by his army buddies, took a battery of eligibility tests for the Army

Specialized Training Program (ASTP). If accepted, applicants would be sent to a university to be enrolled in its engineering curriculum. Joe did well on the tests and after he completed his basic training he became a member of the University of Wisconsin's ASTP program in November, 1943.

By the beginning of 1944 it became evident that the military needed all available troops for its later assault on Fortress Europe and the Japanese held Philippine Islands. As a result, the ASTP was cancelled for all enrolled except those in their final year. In



March, 1944, Joe was reassigned to the 96th Infantry Division, 381st Regiment, Company K and boarded a troop

train to Camp White, near Medford, Oregon. During the next few months, his unit went to Camp Luis Obispo and Camp Callan in California to receive special training in amphibious landings. Late in July the 96th Division arrived at San Francisco harbor and began boarding the five troop ships for Hawaii and eventually the Philippine Islands.

On October 20, 1944, American troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur began their assault on Leyte Island in the Philippines. During an engagement near Catmon Hill on October 29th, Joe was wounded while attacking a Japanese machine gun emplacement. Fellow combatants, under heavy fire, were able to remove him from the battlefield and he was transported to the Army's field hospital set up in the nearby Catholic cathedral. Although Joe was operated on successfully, his wounds were too serious and **he died the next day, October 30, 1944.**

Joe was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, posthumously for exemplary conduct in ground combat against the enemy on or about 20th October 1944 in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

An army buddy, Clay Bushnell, wrote a book *Centurion King* about his combat experiences and dedicated it to the memory of Joseph Phillip

Joseph Phillip Cagney

U.S. Army

96th Infantry Division, 381st Regiment, Company K

Cagney, stating he wrote this book as a testament to the courage and sacrifice of my best friend and buddy.

Joe also was the recipient of the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Philippine Liberation Medal and 6 additional medals. His 381st Infantry Regiment received the Philippines Presidential Unit Citation for gallantry in action.



Joe Cagney
Wounded in Action
Leyte Island, Philippines October 29th
Died October 30, 1942