



Dave Mann

April 11, 2021

When Staff Sergeant, Dave Mann, who died April 11th, was fighting in WWII as a Combat Engineer under the command of General George Patton, he and his squad stopped at a vacant farmhouse in France to find much needed rest. Suddenly an enemy shell from an 88 tore through the farmhouse, killing every member of the squad, leaving just Dave as the sole survivor. For the next 75+ years Dave wondered why he was the only one who lived. This is why.

Dave was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, graduated from Emerson College in Boston, and began what was to be a successful and rewarding 30 year broadcast career as a Morning Man at radio stations in the Boston area, New Hampshire, New York, Worcester, and most recently at WBLQ in Westerly where he enjoyed co-hosting the lifestyle show "Mann About Town" with his wife. During those years he also was a much sought after voiceover talent and recorded commercials, books, and travelogues locally, regionally, and nationally, winning a CLIO award (equivalent of the Oscar for radio commercials) nomination for Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate Service.

However, what made him proudest was being a member of what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation," those selfless soldiers who fought in WWII without rancor or complaint because it was their job to keep America free. Dave never thought he did anything special although he was much decorated, including being awarded three Purple Hearts for injuries incurred in battle. He

had an intense love of the American flag and honored it in every way possible including writing a book, "What I Fought For," then touring the country to lecture to schools and other groups because he felt he was a living history book, and he wanted people to continue telling the stories of their own veterans to their children so our history would never die.

In addition to his radio career, Dave also served for a short time as public relations consort for New York State Senator John Hughes before moving on to managing one of the four big FM stations in the Wertheimer owned Empire State FM Network which extended from Buffalo to Albany. It was at that time in the early '70s that he hired a young girl named Rona who had little radio experience, so he took her under his wing where she remained for 45 years while he showed her the ropes. He did not realize at the time she would become his future wife...but not until 1983. Dave was not exactly a fast mover!

Together Dave and Rona opened an advertising agency in Syracuse, NY specializing in radio and TV commercials. Eleven years later, they left Central New York and moved to the Midwest where Dave once again became a Morning Man in Ohio. After subsequent broadcast stints at news-talk stations in New Hampshire and Worcester, the couple found Westerly and the former WERI and have lived in the area since 1986.

Military and community service were always paramount. In New York Dave was a major volunteer for the Onondaga County Chapter of the American Cancer Society, President of the Syracuse (Eastwood) Rotary Club, and a very active member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, eventually becoming Chapter Commander. He was a lifetime member of that organization nationally in addition to being a lifetime member of the DAV and is enshrined in the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New York. In 2017 he was delighted and humbled to be selected to travel with his friend, Joe Nigrelli, and a few other area veterans on the Honor Flight to Washington, DC

to see the monuments dedicated to their service.

That same year The Pawsox honored Dave as part of their "In Debt to a Vet" program, with the entire stadium standing in tribute, and the Westerly Armory had chosen him as one of their four Honored Citizens to be feted this August. Although it will be posthumous due to postponements because of Covid, a small, private luncheon honoring these four was held last summer and Dave was so proud to have as his special invited guest, Dr. Tom Lanna. Their relationship always cut very deep, and he felt honored to have Dr. Lanna there.

Dave leaves his wife, business partner, partner in life, craziness, and ongoing adventures, Rona, and his much loved and most annoying cats, Greenberg and Boenheim.

According to his wishes, there will be no funeral nor calling hours, but also according to his wishes, there will be "a big party on July 31st (his 96th birthday), and they better say nice things about me!"

So, why was he the only one who survived that attack on the farmhouse?
That's why.

It was a great run.

Donations may be made in Dave's name to the American Flag Committee, 83 Potter Hill Road, Westerly 02891.

Tribute Wall

ML

“What a "mensch!" Dave and I worked together at WHEN Radio in Syracuse during the late 1960s. He was morning jock, I the newsy; he was the pro; I, the newbie. The format was awful. We had to play computer-programmed cuts from some of the most boring music ever recorded! Still, Dave was always patient, funny, tolerant, funny, professional - and funny. It was an honor to share microphones with him. In 2016, several decades (yes, decades) later, Rona called us to say she was taking Dave for a birthday trip to Chicago, where we had moved years before. "Could we meet for dinner?" she asked. We jumped at the chance - and not because Dave was buying! We had a wonderful reunion, enjoyed a fabulous dinner and an even better evening as the good times of years gone by flooded back to us. Dave, who was hitting 90 at the time, was sharp and funny as ever. I truly believed he'd make it past 100. OK, so he came up a little short, but we'll always remember him as a class act, war hero, patriot and wonderful friend and colleague. May his memory be for a blessing.

Mike Leiderman - April 24, 2021 at 04:18 PM

DH

“Dora and Dave Hellner purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dave Mann.



Dora and Dave Hellner - April 23, 2021 at 07:57 PM

TN

“ I met Dave a couple of times and what a gentleman he was. I thanked him for his service during WW2 also told him he was part of the greatest generation that ever lived and thanked him for that also. Take care Rona you did a great job of caring for Dave.

tom nall - April 18, 2021 at 06:31 PM

SW

“ So sorry to hear about Dave's passing, what a wonderful man. I will truly miss him on Mann about town!!!

susan white - April 18, 2021 at 05:52 PM

JC

“ There are no words sufficient to express my affection for my buddy, Dave Mann. My scotch and New England Patriots football buddy. My buddy who - in his 80s - was willing to donate a kidney to me. My buddy who allowed my oldest granddaughter to be amazed by wrinkles in his face that amazed her. My buddy whose wife suffered in quiet while he and I yelled at the TV when our Patriots did well and when they did not. My buddy who would navigate the streets of NYC while his dear wife Rona gave step by step instructions so we could catch a play or go to a restaurant. My buddy, who with his wife and my dear friend Rona, shared vacations in Palm Springs and many a drink and adventure with my daughter and me, and then my daughter, her husband and my granddaughters and on through so many years without complaining. What an amazing life you lived. What a wonderful addition to our family you have been. I love you dearly and miss you immensely. Until we meet again in a place with no more pain, no more tears, no more death.
Janie

Janie Carlisle - April 17, 2021 at 03:20 PM