Walter Hughes

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Walter Hughes served his country proudly during World War II. At the age of 12, he went to work for $3 a week on his stepfather's tugboat. When the vessel was pushed into the auxiliary at the start of the war, Mr. Hughes became a merchant seaman at 14. At age 18 he bravely entered into the service of the United States Army.

As a member of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Mr. Hughes took part in some of the best known battles and missions of the World War II. In 1944, he first saw combat in Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands. While in Holland, Mr. Hughes received

shrapnel wounds to his shoulder and back when a bullet hit his shoulder strap, and another ripped the gun from his hands. During this engagement, a fellow injured soldier Mr. Hughes was assisting gave him his sidearm, knowing that he himself would be going to a hospital. Mr. Hughes credits that gun for his survival; he pulled the .45 from his belt and ran at the enemy, firing, and did not stop until he fell on top of their bodies.

At one point, Mr. Hughes spent time in an Army hospital, where he was told he would need to have his right foot amputated. Not agreeing, he slipped out and made his way back to the 82nd Airborne. At the close of the World War II, Mr. Hughes took part in the liberation of Camp Wöbbelin, Germany.

Mr. Hughes was honorably discharged from the Army after receiving two Purple Hearts, the Bronze star, France's Legion of Honor and a Belgian postage stamp with his image as he charged the enemy in the Battle of the Bulge. He returned home to enjoy his career in the tug boat industry.

In 1981, Mr. Hughes and his loving wife, Mary, moved to Port Jervis, where he still resides today. They were married for 56 wonderful years before her passing, but Mr. Hughes is confident that she is watching over him now.