

French museum seeks information about Ralph T. Brennan '35, World War II hero

Scan the names on the War Memorial Grotto Honor Roll and near the top of the plaque honoring alumni who gave their lives in World War II you will find “Ralph T. Brennan '35.” Visit Flavigny, France, south of Nancy, and you will find this same name memorialized on a plaque on the Government Bridge over the Moselle River.

Fifty-seven years after Brennan, 32, commanding officer of F Company, 134th Regiment, 35th Division, gave his life at the Battle of Flavigny on September 12, 1944, citizens there are seeking more information about this American hero whose deeds are commemorated—in both English and French—by the plaque on the bridge that was the site of one of the bloodiest battles between Normandy and the Bulge.

In 1996, Brennan’s family erected a cross on the bridge in his memory in 1946, but over the years, townspeople forgot the significance of this memorial, some thinking that the cross honored an accident victim. In September 1998, however, Brennan’s valor was once again memorialized when a new commemorative plaque was unveiled. At that time, Jerome Leclerc, secretary of the Lorraine museum association—“Espace Memoire Lorraine 1939-

1945”—proclaimed about Brennan, “For us, he is the incarnation of the hell of the bridge of Flavigny. He must not sink into oblivion again.”

The museum association—along with Brennan’s great niece, Kathy Brennan of Ann Arbor, Mich.—hopes to learn more about Brennan’s short but substantial life. They are asking for letters, photos, and reminisces from fellow PC alumni. These will be included in exhibition space dedicated to the Lorraine region’s American liberators.

In addition to being an alumnus, Brennan was the brother of the late Rev. Robert E. Brennan, O.P., a professor at PC and/or corporation member from 1931-1956 and 1966-1967. His late sister, Catherine, was a Dominican nun, Sister Mary Alfred, O.P.

Please forward any information and photographs that you may have of Lieutenant Brennan to Publications Center Executive Director Paula Keogh, Providence College, Providence, RI 02918-0001, or call her at 401-865-2645. Material will be forwarded to Brennan’s niece and to the museum organizers. It will also be shared in a future issue of *providence* magazine.



Lt. Ralph T. Brennan '35