

**May, 27<sup>th</sup> 2013:**

**PETER SCOLARO**

On behalf of the Village of Piermont -  
Welcome residents, honored guests and Gold Star families to our  
Memorial Day commemoration.

This Memorial Day, we turn our attention to Private Peter Scolaro,  
Piermont resident who joined the conflict at the outset of US  
involvement in World War II. Pvt. Scolaro enlisted in May of 1942 and,  
after basic training, was assigned to the 310<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in  
direct support of the 85<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> US Corps of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army.

Pvt. Scolaro prepared for his role in Europe throughout the summer of  
1943, training in camps in Louisiana. Pvt. Scolaro and the 310<sup>th</sup>  
Engineer Battalion sailed for Casablanca on Christmas Eve 1943 and,  
after a short time in North Africa, arrived in Naples to join the Italian  
Campaign.

The Allied forces had landed on the toe of Italy in September 1943 and  
had made progress along the west coast to Naples by the time  
Pvt. Scolaro and his battalion left for the European Theater. The  
continued northward advance up the Italian peninsula to Rome was  
blocked by the German Army's formidable Gustav Line - which was  
hinged on Monte Cassino. In attempt to bypass this obstacle, the Allies  
had landed 50,000 troops at Anzio, only 33 miles south of Rome, in  
January 1944. The landing succeeded in securing the beachhead, but  
failed to outflank the line. Enemy forces mounted a powerful  
counteroffensive in early February and reduced the beachhead to a very  
shallow foothold, while German defenses at Monte Cassino held out  
unimpaired against the US 5<sup>th</sup> Army.

The Gustav Line represented a stubborn German defense that had to be broken before Rome could be taken. More importantly, the aggressive attack on that front and push towards Rome was part of a larger plan to force the German forces to commit as many troops to Italy as possible - in order to ease the way for the Allied cross-Channel assault in June of 1944 - what would become D-Day.

Pvt. Scolaro and the 310<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion arrived near Naples in March for the preparation for the assault on the Gustav Line. As they approached the front near Gaeta, the Battalion performed operations under fire for the first time. Bridge building, road maintenance, minefield clearance, and construction of hasty fortifications were among the major engineering tasks Pvt. Scolaro and the 310<sup>th</sup> performed, often under withering fire.

When the offensive started, on the night of May 11, 1944, Pvt. Scolaro's Battalion played a critical part.

The 310<sup>th</sup> operated ferries across the Garigliano River, which was continually under mortar shellfire and also sent several mine clearing parties into "No Man's land" to act as second scouts searching the terrain for trip wires and mines, clearing the path for the Infantry.

Despite the fact that the Allies outnumbered the German army by a ratio of 3 to 1, it took seven days before the Gustav Line could be broken, finally with Allies occupying the famed Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino. On one occasion, an extensive minefield on a hill known as "131" near Solacciano had to be cleared by the 310<sup>th</sup> to allow the Infantry clear passage. Perhaps involved in this mine sweep Pvt. Scolaro gave his life on Sunday May 14, 1944.

The son of an Italian family here in Piermont – the Scolaro Barber Shop was an enduring fixture in the Village in what is now Cibelle's - Peter F. Scolaro is now interred in the Sicily-Rome American cemetery just outside of Anzio, Italy, far from his Piermont home.

We remember all those whom their family touched. We, their extended Piermont family honor the sacrifice of Pvt. Scolaro and his family and, through this annual ceremony ensure his efforts will not be forgotten. In remembrance of him, we express our gratitude by naming this stretch of Piermont Avenue after Pvt Peter F. Scolaro.

Keep Pvt. Scolaro and all of our fallen soldiers in your thoughts and prayers - it is in their honor that we gather this day. I ask you to keep in mind all of our men and women who are serving our country today. As we enjoy this beautiful day in Piermont, away from our own labors, let it not be far from our thoughts that these soldiers continue to stand guard for us on foreign soil, in harm's way. May God bless them, keep them safe, and make sure they return home soon.