

**May, 26<sup>th</sup> 2014:**

**BERNARD HARING**

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 Sergeant Bernard Haring,  
who, like many of our veterans, enlisted in early 1942 at the outset of US  
involvement in World War II.

Sgt. Haring's story strikingly reflects our own typical Memorial Day  
endeavors: perhaps a walk on the Pier; or an outing to the beach, a trek  
through the mountains, or a hike in the forest.

After basic training Sgt. Haring, was assigned to the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Regiment - the Blue Spaders, 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the US Armed Forces. He  
marched down the Pier and departed from US soil for the European  
conflict in August of 1942, arriving in England after a week at sea.

After two months of training for combat, his unit departed to participate  
in Operation Torch, leading the first amphibious assault on the beaches  
of North Africa, establishing the first front lines against the German  
army. The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division faced Panzer Divisions throughout the  
North African Campaign from November 1942 through May of 1943,  
helping secure Algeria and Tunisia.

In July 1943, Sgt. Haring's division left the coast of Africa and took part  
in another ambitious amphibious assault in the invasion of Sicily.  
The 1<sup>st</sup> saw heavy action when making this landing, opposed by an  
overwhelming force of Italian and German tanks at the Battle of Gela.  
They successfully secured the beach and moved inland to capture the  
nearby Ponte Olivo airfield.

Throughout the summer of '43, Sergeant Haring's division proceeded across the center of Sicily, slogging it out, battle after battle through the mountains. In early August, his regiment saw some of the heaviest fighting of the entire Sicilian campaign at the Battle of Troina. Sgt. Haring's regiment lost more than half their strength as they were cut off from the rest of the division, in the attempt to outflank the defenses of that mountain town.

Once Sicily was secured in early November 1943, Sgt. Haring's division was transported back to England to prepare for yet another amphibious assault. This time, the experienced 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry was to lead forces in Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy. After seven months of preparation, Sergeant Haring and his regiment comprised the first wave of troops on Omaha Beach on D-Day. They faced heavy defensive fire, suffering 30 percent casualties in the first hour.

After securing the beachhead, and surviving the initial day, Sgt. Haring and his regiment pressed on to liberate Saint-Lô, and breaking from the Hedgerows, proceeded through Normandy. Sgt. Haring's regiment spent the balance of July and August of 1944 aggressively pushing the front line across Northern France and Belgium, in a continuous, offensive press on the German defenses.

By September 1944, the front line had advanced to Germany's western border, protected by the extensive Siegfried Line. The brutal battles of Aachen, the Hürtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge lay ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry on the German frontier. Pushing towards the German border, through the woods near Aachen, Sgt. Haring's valiant efforts in securing freedom were finally extinguished. Sgt. Bernard Haring was killed near the town of Aubel Belgium on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1944 - just as other US troops were crossing parts of the Siegfried line into Germany for the first time.

Today we remember Bernard and the Haring family. We, their extended Piermont family honor the sacrifice of Sgt. Haring 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 Sgt. Bernard F. Haring.

Keep Sgt. Haring and all of our fallen soldiers in your thoughts and prayers - it is in their honor that we gather this day. Also, keep in mind that these sacrifices are not frozen in time - since we gathered here last Memorial Day, over 125 men & women gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the service of our country. Over 125 families, and communities like our own are facing the raw, recent loss of their native sons and daughters today.

I ask you to keep in mind all of our men and women who are serving our country. 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 ensure they return home soon.