



Henry G. Gerdes

October 20, 1919 - June 13, 2023

Henry was born on October 20, 1919, in NYC to John H. Gerdes and Agnes (Thoele) Gerdes, His family ran an ice cream and candy store in Manhattan. Henry was 5 years old when the family moved to Huntington. The family continued in the ice cream business on Main Street in Huntington and lived above the store. It was expected that Henry help out with chores in the store at a young age.

Henry had to walk to school everyday from the young grades to the end of High School. In those days there was no bus.

He graduated from Huntington High School in 1938 and continued to work in the ice cream store.

He proudly served in the U.S. Army during World War II and received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He landed on Normandy Beach on D-Day plus 20 with Gen. Patton's third army. His battles and campaigns were Ardennes, Central Europe, Normandy, Northern France, and Rhineland. He served in the 204th Engineers Company as a Corporal, Medical Tech.

Henry received the Bronze Star medal for helping a Major in the infantry who had his chest blown open. Henry was building bridges nearby when he heard and saw the Major injured. All he had was a small first aid kit, but the Major

had a larger kit and luckily had two large clean towels, Henry rolled up one towel and shoved it into his open chest and took the other one and wrapped it around his body to try to stop the bleeding, He took a belt and put that around the Major's chest to try to stop the bleeding, They were near the river in the lowest area, To get there you had to climb down a snake-like cliff and stay on the path as there were mines all around Henry had been going up and down that path all day and he knew the topography--where to walk and where to not walk. The Major needed to be transported to a hospital. By the time the ambulance arrived it was dark and they couldn't get the ambulance down there. Henry told the ambulance drivers to follow him down and to step only where he stepped. He held a flashlight behind him so that they could see and down they went, Put the Major on a stretcher and doing the same route in reverse went back up the hilly terrain carrying the Major. They all made it to the ambulance and the Major was whisked away. Weeks later Henry was called in by his Commander and told he was getting the Bronze Star because the Major wrote to Henry's Commander and told him he was in a hospital in the UK and is alive because of his help. He remembered his patch and his first name.

For the Purple Heart Medal: Henry was standing in an open truck with two other colleagues and a mine went off and blew up the truck. Henry went flying into the air and landed in a very muddy river ravine, He had to be pulled out by his troop members as he went down so far in the mud--way over his knees almost to his hips. His colleagues told him they thought it was the end for Henry when they saw him flying into the air and landing in the ravine, He was medically treated for a week or so for his injuries to his back, hip and knees and was able to rejoin his group as they didn't move that far.

After returning from the war, he worked for Grumman's in the Tool and Records department as an office worker and mid-level manager. He worked there for 32 years and retired in 1977. After retiring, Grumman's called him

back for the next two summers to help out doing the same job he had done for 32 years.

The Huntington Fire Department: Henry was an 83-1/2 year member. He joined in December of 1939. When he was 99 he received his 80 year award from the Department and was told that he was the only fireman to attain that longevity award He was the Grand Marshall for their 175 years anniversary parade. He was the oldest living fireman and the longest serving fireman in their history. His company was the Protection Hose Company. He held several positions in the company: 1st Lieutenant, 2nd Lieutenant and Captain of the Hose Co. He was the proudest of his 52 years as Hose Co, secretary.

Henry loved living in Huntington and walking all over. He especially liked walking around the lake in Heckscher Park where he met lots of people who he enjoyed talking with. He liked the park so much that he joined an organization to preserve the park as it is and made many trips to the Town Hall to speak his mind about that.

He is survived by two children, a son, Henry (AnnMarie) and a daughter, Betsy (Rich), four grandchildren--Mary, Elizabeth, Cody and Rory, He also is survived by two great grandchildren--Mateo and Lucy. His wife, Elizabeth Hipp, predeceased him in 1987 and his older brother John and sister Carolyn also predeceased him.

Cemetery Details

St. Patrick's Cemetery

45 Huntington Road
Huntington, NY 11743

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 20. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(631) 423-2185
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Visitation

JUN 20. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(631) 423-2185
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Firematic Services

JUN 20. 7:30 PM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(631) 423-2185
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Gathering of Family and Friends

JUN 21. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(631) 423-2185
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Burial

JUN 21 (ET)

St. Patrick's Cemetery
45 Huntington Road
Huntington, NY 11743

Tribute Wall

RG

“ I fondly remember my Dad. Richard A. Griffin, Sr, taking me down to the Huntington Fire House. My Dad was a former Captain of the Huntington F.D. Protection Hose. Firefighting has been in me since I could crawl.

I remember stopping by after I was a firefighter and chatting with Henry and the other HFD members. I always received such a warm welcome.

So sorry for your loss. Henry and your family are in our hearts, prayers, and thoughts. May God Bless Henry and your family.

My Dad is in Heaven and will welcome Henry along with another HFD member, my grandfather, Charlie Berdan.

Thank you for sharing the amazing stories of Henry's life. Huntington Fire Department was very fortunate to have him as a member.

Richard Griffin, - June 21, 2023 at 02:30 AM



“ Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Henry G. Gerdes.



June 16, 2023 at 11:11 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Henry G. Gerdes.*



June 16, 2023 at 11:08 AM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Henry G. Gerdes.*



June 16, 2023 at 11:02 AM