



## John B. Alt

June 12, 1926 - November 25, 2009

John B. Alt, 83, of Cleona died Wednesday November 25, 2009 at the Lebanon VA Medical Center. He was the husband of Anna M. Funk Alt with whom they celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary this past June. John was born in Philadelphia on June 12, 1926. He enlisted in the United States Navy on June 22, 1943 and served as an electricians mate and gunner aboard the USS Hunt destroyer (DD-674) during WWII from September 1943 to July 1945, assigned to the 5th Fleet's Task Force 58 and 3rd Fleet's Task Force 38. The USS Hunt engaged the enemy on numerous occasions, including the invasion of the Marshall Islands, bombardment of Truk Atoll, invasion of the Marianas, battle of the Philippine Sea, battle of Peleliu, landings at Leyte Gulf and the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He helped rescue 422 survivors from the stricken aircraft carrier USS Franklin then protected the ship from further attack. On April 14, 1945 the USS Hunt was struck and heavily damaged by a kamikaze while on picket duty during the battle for Okinawa, a second kamikaze was shot down before it could reach the ship. The USS Hunt returned to San Francisco in July 1945. He separated from the US Navy on March 12, 1946. John B. Alt enlisted in the US Army on November 23, 1946. He served in the US occupation forces in Japan from May 15, 1947 to May 10, 1949 as the Palace guard in Tokyo. After Japan he spent a short tour of duty at Fort Campbell Kentucky. He then served three combat tours of duty in the Korean War from the fall of 1950 thru 1953. After helping capture the North Korean capital of Pyongyang his infantry unit

spearheaded the deepest US forces penetration towards the Chinese border by capturing the town of Sonchon 17 miles south of the Yalu river (the North Korean/Chinese border). A combat after action report indicated: "Corporal John B. Alt, a squad leader of the 3rd Platoon, Company "B", 21st Infantry regiment, 24th Infantry Division, distinguished himself and showed extraordinary heroism on July 14th 1951. As his squad moved out into the attack they were hit by a tremendous artillery barrage. One of these rounds fell in the midst of his squad, killing two men and wounding several others. Despite a heavy machine gun cross-fire and a continuous artillery barrage, Corporal Alt, in the face of almost certain death single handedly pulled his men to a relative position of safety from which they could be evacuated. This deed was even more remarkable when one considers that corporal Alt was wounded himself. After this was accomplished he proceeded with the remainder of his squad into the attack. When the initial objective was reached, Corporal Alt was ordered to the aid station. Despite his protests he left the squad. The following day corporal Alt voluntarily returned to his squad. In a renewed attack upon the enemy he raced forward completely exposed and tossed several grenades into the enemy bunkers killing many of the enemy. He followed this up by advancing to the next bunker wiping out many more enemy soldiers with M-1 rifle fire. Corporal Alt's inspiring leadership and courage spurred the men to fight valiantly against a numerically superior enemy." He was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in this action. He married the former Anna Mary Funk of Cleona Pennsylvania on June 12, 1954. He was stationed at numerous posts in the United States, including Battle Creek Michigan, Wilmington Delaware, Seaford Delaware, and Fort Indiantown Gap. John B. Alt spent three years assigned to Fort Amador, Panama from 1963-1966. He retired as a Sergeant Major from the US Army at Fort Lewis Washington on June 1, 1970. His awards and decorations include: Silver Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, US Army Commendation Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Korean Service Medal (with 1 silver star and 2 bronze stars), Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal (with 5 oak leaf

clusters), United Nations Service Medal, Philippines Independence Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Occupational Medal (Japan), Pacific Theater Ribbon (with 5 stars), American Theater Ribbon, Victory Medal, and Philippines Liberation Ribbon (with 2 stars). After retirement from the Army he returned to Lebanon Pennsylvania where he was an avid boater, fisherman, hunter, and SCUBA diver. He also enjoyed traveling and camping. He is among the last of a generation who saved our country as they risked everything on our behalf. The United States, and our way of life, would not exist today, if not for the actions of such men. In addition to his wife he is survived by three sons John "Jack" W. Alt of Palmyra, Jody Alt husband of Gina of Mary Esther, FL and Jeffrey Alt husband of Karuna of Niceville, FL; one daughter Susan J. Alt Seyfert wife of Allen Seyfert of Myerstown; six grandchildren Jack Alt, Scott, Bradley and Deanna Seyfert, Thomas and Alyssa Alt; three great-grandchildren Rachel and Jenna Alt and Gage Seyfert. Funeral services will be held Monday November 30, 2009 at 10:30AM from the Kreamer Funeral Home and Crematory 618 E. Main St. Annville. Interment will take place at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery with full military honors. Viewing will be held one hour prior to the service from 9:30-10:30AM at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers contributions can be made to the Lebanon VA Hospital in c/o Hospice 1700 S. Lincoln Ave. Lebanon, PA 17042.

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