

Joseph Kovalcik
Ball Turret Gunner
779th Bombardment Squadron (H)
464th Bombardment Group(H)

The first entry is the write up for Quilts of Valor: (thought this write up would be of more interest to 464 members than the standard obituary.) Standard obit is included below the Quilt of Valor write up.

Joseph Kovalcik
August 6, 1925 — October 24, 2024

Joseph enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1943, upon graduating from high school, and was called up on January 5, 1944. He flew as a ball turret gunner on a B-24 Liberator with the Fifteenth Air Force, 464th Bomb Group, in Italy. Joseph completed 35 combat missions and was awarded the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf clusters, the European Theater Operations (ETO) Medal with five Battle Stars, the American Defense Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal. The 464th Bomb Group was awarded a Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation for its combat action in leading the 55th Bombardment Wing formation through an extremely heavy anti-aircraft barrage and sixty aggressive enemy fighter aircraft, to bomb the oil refineries in Vienna, Austria, resulting in the complete destruction of vital installations critical to the German war effort. His five battle stars were awarded for his participation in the following major campaigns: Battle of the North Apennines, Air War Balkans, Battle of Central Europe, Battle of the Rhineland, and Battle for Po Valley. Joseph was honorably discharged with the rank of Staff Sergeant, in October 1945.

In 1942, Joseph served as a Civil Air Patrol cadet, an Air Raid Warden, and as an Airplane Spotter with the Civil Defense in Uniontown, PA. Prior to his enlistment in 1943, he became the first Eagle Scout from Uniontown BSA Troop #2 and later served as their scoutmaster. After the war, Joseph earned his degree from Duquesne University and subsequently worked as an engineer for Westinghouse Electric Corporation, retiring in 1986. Joseph and his wife Phyllis have 4 children, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Joseph, an avid model plane builder, passed on his interest in aviation to a son and grandson who became licensed pilots, enabling the decorated Veteran to once again leave the bounds of the earth for the skies.

Obituary:

Joseph Kovalcik

August 6, 1925 — October 24, 2024

Joseph M. Kovalcik, 99, of Perryopolis, Perry Twp., passed away Thursday, October 24, 2024, at WVU - Ruby Memorial Hospital, Morgantown, WV. Born August 6, 1925 in Uniontown, PA he was the son of the late Michael and Mary Helen Gavulic Kovalcik. A resident of Perryopolis for the past 67 years, Mr. Kovalcik was a member of St. John The Baptist RC Church, Perryopolis and was retired from Westinghouse, Bettis, Waltz Mill and Monroeville Plants, where he worked as an Engineer. He was a WWII veteran having served in the Army Air Force, was a member of the Perryopolis Gold Star VFW Post 7023, EAA Chapter 45, was the first Eagle Scout in Uniontown Troop 2, enjoyed aviation, model plane building and working in his garden.

He is survived by his wife Phyllis Kollar Kovalcik to whom he was married 67 years; four children JoAnne & Stephen Strom of Telford, PA, Thomas & Anna Kovalcik of Barrington, NH, William & Lisa Kovalcik of Shorewood, WI, Julie & Ernest Kennedy of Washington; brother & sister in law Vincent & Frances Kovalcik of Clifton, NY; 11 grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He is preceded in death by two sons David Joseph Kovalcik, Joseph Michael Kovalcik; three sisters Elizabeth Bernhagen, Rosemary Dehus and Pauline Welsh.

Biography of Joseph Kovalcik

Christmas 1944