



## THE OLD SAYBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING, PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE HISTORY OF OLD SAYBROOK

### Annual Appeal: A GIFT OF HISTORY INSPIRED BY THE LIFE OF SGT. CLAUDE J. ZANNI

May 2022

Dear Supporters of the Old Saybrook Historical Society,

You are well aware of the expenses necessary to maintain and improve the campus at 350 Main Street. Through your generosity and commitment to our mission, we have an environment and structures that are treasured and well maintained.

It is the stories that bring us to the heart of the organization and, as you commit again to support us, I think the one I write about today will enforce the importance of your gift. It is a story that I will never forget and I believe that it will inspire you also.

Diane Hoyt, devoted member and volunteer, serves as an administrative assistant at the Archives Building and this winter she received a message from Brett Martin. Brett is a senior at George Washington University. This message began a collaboration that continues today.

The subject is Claude Zanni who lived in Old Saybrook. His family was one of the first Italian families to settle in our town. His father worked for the Piano Factory in Ivoryton and the parents and seven children lived in a 3-bedroom house on Bokum Road. Claude, along with his three brothers, Dean, Silvio and John served our country during World War II. The inspiring story of Brett and Claude is told on the following pages.

We plan to organize a tribute to Claude when his family visits June 24<sup>th</sup>. The eulogy, given by Brett, will be read by him at the World War II memorial on our town green. We will be posting, on our website, Brett's reading of the eulogy at Claude's grave in Normandy. We will save the biography that Brett will provide and never forget "Cabby" and Brett's incredible tribute.

Thank you for your help so that our past is not forgotten. We must learn from it to build a better future. The sacrifices, the memories, the stories must be protected and remembered always.

Marie

### **PUBLIC INVITED MEMORIAL SERVICE HONORING CLAUDE ZANNI AND HIS BROTHERS NOON, JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup> ON THE TOWN GREEN**



Brett Martin and family descendents from around the country in attendance. Brett will read his eulogy and tributes will be given.

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*The Old Saybrook Historical Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization*

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## SERVICE OVERVIEW

Name	Claude J Zanni
From	Middlesex County, Connecticut
Born	April 21, 1908
Death	May 8, 1944
War	World War II
ID	31170720
Rank	Staff Sergeant
Specialty	Ball Turret Gunner
Branch	US Army Air Corps
Group	390th Bomber Group, Heavy, 569th Bomber Squadron
Cause	Hostile, Killed in Action
Location	Cherbourg, France
Awarded	★ Air Medal ★ Purple Heart