



The Long Road to Bataan and Beyond: Letters and Memories of a Man From the Greatest Generation

Joseph Paul Delon

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This is the story of Joseph Paul (Joe) Delon, decorated World War II veteran and former Mayor of Rushville, Indiana. His life spanned the eighty-seven plus years from World War I (1914) into the so-called War on Terrorism (2002). The first-born of five sons and one daughter, Joe was a member of a close-knit Quaker farm family. In this environment, he learned the value of hard work and adaptability that prepared him for the challenges that faced him as an adult during the Great Depression, to a greater extent during World War II and his return to civilian life. Joe entered military service in April 1941 as a Private, a "selectee" in the pre-war draft; he was honorably discharged in November 1945 with the rank of 1st Lieutenant, having received a battlefield commission. During nearly all of this time he served with Company I, 152nd Infantry, 38th Infantry Division, which earned the designation, "Avengers of Bataan" He earned the Combat Infantry Badge, two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. After he was discharged, Joe married and resumed his civilian career in the oil business. As he neared the end of this endeavor, he once again looked to public service and successfully ran for mayor of a small Indiana city. A major new challenge facing him now was economic development. An important part of the solution was that he negotiate successfully with his former enemy to bring Japanese industries to the community.



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