

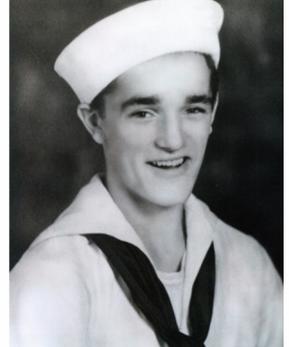


The American Hungarian Federation

Serving the Community since 1906 - Fidelissimus ad Mortem

Stephen Ganzberger Memorial by Zach Morris, his loving Grandson

Stephen Ganzberger was born on August 25th, 1924 in Wyandotte, MI. He grew up in Wyandotte, MI and enlisted in the Navy the day after his 18th birthday, August 26th, 1942, during World War II. He would see action in the Pacific Theater aboard two different LCI's (Landing Craft Infantry) and be on active duty for 36 straight months. He served aboard the U.S.S. LCI (L) 329 [1942-1944], and also the U.S.S. LCI (G) 65 [1944-1945]. By war's end, he had been awarded 4 medals, 3 battle stars, 2 campaign bars, 2 ribbons, the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, the Insignia for the Amphibious Forces, and Honor Guard responsibilities.



His WWII journey began on the LCI (L) 329 from in the southern Solomon Islands where he would see his first action of the war on Rendova Harbor, New Georgia Island. On the afternoon of July 4th, 1943, while his LCI Group was landing Army troops of the 169th Infantry onto the beaches of Rendova Island, sixteen Japanese Mitsubishi 97 bombers in attack formation bombed the Allied landing beaches. He shot down one of the twelve bombers that were eventually shot down by anti-aircraft fire. This action earned him his first Bronze Star.

While on the LCI (L) 329, he would later land troops on the Russell Islands; New Georgia Island; Kolombangara; Vella Lavella; and Treasury Islands (Stirling), Bougainville.

In January 1944 he transferred for duty aboard the U.S.S. LCI (L) 65. In June 1944, his LCI was converted from a Landing Craft to a Gunboat, being renamed LCI (G) 65. Aboard the 65, he would participate in the Morotai Island and the Philippines Campaigns.

He would be involved in the Leyte Gulf, Philippines Campaign in October 1944. From his position in San Pedro Bay on the LCI (G) 65, he witnessed General Douglas MacArthur's famous October 20th return landing on Red Beach, Leyte Island. On October 24th, 1944 at around 9am, a kamikaze pilot made a suicide crash dive into the stern of the LCI (G) 65, killing Stephen's friend Lester Eugene "Paul" Aiston (SC3c). The action in Leyte Gulf would earn Stephen his second Bronze Star.

His last action of the war was covering landings of the Sixth US Army on White Beach #1 and #2 in Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippines on January 9th, 1945. He would be sent home four months later in May 1945 to recover from battle fatigue. He was later awarded a Silver Star because of an accumulation of all actions he performed during "Operation Cartwheel," from Guadalcanal, to Bougainville, finally ending with the victory in Rabaul, New Britain. Stephen Ganzberger was honorably discharged as a Quartermaster 2nd Class from the Navy on August 15th, 1945.

Upon returning to civilian life, Stephen Ganzberger worked as a sheet metal, heating and air conditioning mechanic for more than 50 years. He married his wife Patricia Ganzberger on April 28th, 1951, and they remained together for 60 years. They eventually had 6 children.

He would become a Southgate City Councilman for 14 years from 1970 to 1984, in Southgate, Michigan. He was elected as a credit union president, and later as president of Sheet Metal Workers Local 80. He was instrumental in many community and fundraising projects, and also served as the employee representative to the Civil Service Commission. His passion was playing golf, the sport he loved. He always kept devoutly close to his faith

When he retired, he became a licensed builder and a heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractor. He also served as liaison to the Capital Improvements Commission, where he provided input into the construction of City Hall, Police & Fire departments, and the courthouse. The World War II veteran and former Southgate councilman died on Friday, May 20, 2011. He was 86.

In addition to his wife Patricia, he is survived by his children - Stephen, Michael, Patrick, Heidi, Victoria and Barrie; and his seven grandchildren - Eric, Kelly, Abigail, Zach, Patricia, Caroline, and Geoffrey. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Read more: www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_memorials_stephen_ganzberger.htm

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