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Professor
History
(1962-2006)



WWII

Invasion of Rome on June 4, 1944.

There is a little war story that goes with this photo. It was taken in Rome, July 1944 while I was on leave of absence from my unit. After about four months of being "hemmed in" and encircled by the German army at Anzio (Axis Sally on the radio called it the largest concentration camp that the Germans had) our unit along with considerable reinforcements broke out in late May 1944, and pursued the German army through Rome and into Tuscany. My commanding officer, a Stanford ROTC graduate and son-in-law of the famous explorer Admiral Richard Byrd, authorized my leave of absence for R&R at the "Excelsior Hotel" a five star layout on the Via Veneto that had been taken over by the US 5th Army for officers R&R. He must have had a great deal of confidence in me because besides giving me a jeep and driver for the trip south to Rome, he promoted me to 1st Lieutenant and recommended me for the Silver Star Medal. But like all war stories the above narrative has an ironic twist. During the semester break for the academic year 1983-84, my wife June and I visited Rome, Florence, Assisi, as well as a somber visit to the old battleground around Anzio and the military cemetery located there. Here is the ironic twist: while in Rome we stayed at the Excelsior Hotel where I had checked in some 39 years before. Suffice it to say in 1983 the rooms were much more expensive than my earlier stay, courtesy of the US Army.



[I am sure John has many stories inside of him about his WWII experiences that we'd love to hear but we are thankful for his participation in this project, for his military service that earned him recognition with the Silver Star Medal and for his service to The College at Brockport.]