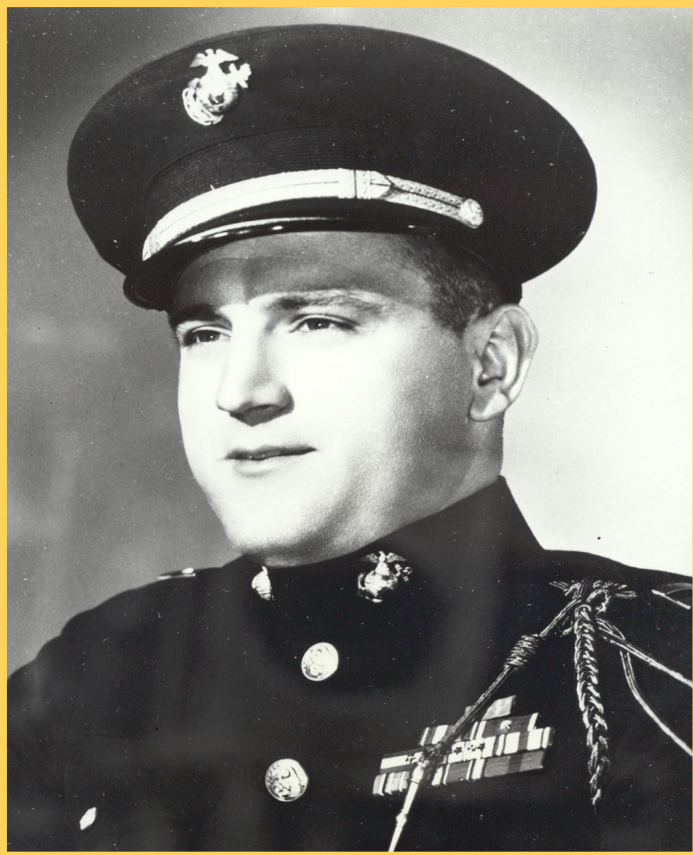


Alumnus of the Year

Captain Rouh, Congressional Medal of Honor Winner, Named

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Captain Carlton R. Rouh, 2013's Alumnus of the Year

Haddon Heights High School has produced some fairly illustrious over the years, including the founder of Southwest Airlines. His story, however, is not the story of the hour: one of Heights' alumni received the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is the highest honor that can be awarded to a member of the armed forces. Carlton R. Rouh was given the Medal of Honor after diving on a grenade to save several men in his squadron. He was one of 28 American men who dove on a grenade in a desperate attempt to save other soldiers over the course of the war. Four of those men survived; Captain Rouh was one of them.

Carlton Rouh grew up in Lindenwold, NJ, and attended Haddon Heights High School in the 1930s- in that time period, Heights students were not just residents of Lawnside, Barrington and Haddon Heights, but actually came from many surrounding towns. Rouh played football for four years at 3HS and was coached by the legendary George "Cap" Baker. Rouh graduated in 1937 and worked as a manager at a local hotel, but when the United States got involved in World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he did what most young American men did: he enlisted. Rouh joined the Marines and served in the Pacific, fighting against the Japanese.

In 1944, Rouh's squadron was in the process of securing an outpost when he was hit in the back by a sniper shot. While reeling from the blow (which probably would have incapacitated any normal person), a grenade flew through the window of the house and the already wounded Rouh, presumably while channeling Captain America, elected to dive on the explosive in an attempt to save his squad. He was successful – and not only did Rouh not die, he remained conscious for the rest of the battle. Once the Marines had won cover for the night, they carried Rouh back to the first aid station. "That was a miserable trip back," Rouh commented after the fact.

However, Captain Rouh's story does not end there; no, Rouh was not in the clear just because they brought him back to the beach. While waiting to board a plane to take him to sea where he would be moved to Australia for further medical treatment, Rouh was hit by a stray mortar. So, in the span of just several hours, Rouh was afflicted with a sniper shot



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to the back, a grenade to the vast majority of his physical entity, and a mortar to whatever was left of his physical entity at that point. Remarkably, Captain Rouh was still not dead, and was received later that day off shore on the medical ship.

Carlton Rouh was given the Congressional Medal of Honor for his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity," but personally I subscribe to the idea that you can't really describe the mental toughness and bravery associated with willingly jumping onto a live grenade. After the war, Captain Rouh returned to South Jersey, got married to his high school sweetheart Phyllis Rowand, raised his daughter (Jacquelyn A. Govan), served as mayor of Lindenwold and lived a fairly long life (given that it involved a grenade), dying at the age of 58 in Lawnside.

The story of Carlton Rouh continues to inspire: his tale of heroism has been featured in several books written about World War II, and numerous online articles can be found that detail his exploits. Another alumnus, Joe Ade (Class of 1950), has made spreading the word about Captain Rouh something of a personal mission. Mr. Ade is himself a veteran, having served in Korea, and is also commander of the Haddonfield American Legion. I was able to speak with Mr. Ade in preparation for this article, and his admiration for Captain Rouh and his heroic deeds are quite apparent. It has been Mr. Ade's hope that Carlton Rouh may one day be featured in the Haddon Heights Hall of Fame for illustrious alumni; considering the honor he received and the remarkable life he lived, we can think of no better candidate.



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Mission Statement

"To insure that Haddon Heights High School offers the best academic and extracurricular programs to each and every student. This will be accomplished by promoting school spirit and support among the school's alumni, as well as the communities of Haddon Heights, Barrington and Lawnside."

