



SARATOGA COUNTY  
VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY  
2144 DOUBLEDAY AVE, BALLSTON SPA, NEW YORK 12020  
Phone: (518)-884-4115 Fax: (518)-884-4290



*Veteran Bio- Donald J. Cramer*  
*US Air Force 1945*

**Prior to Service:**

Donald was born on April 30, 1924. Donald Cramer was the son of M.Sgt. Frank Cramer, USMC and Edith Cramer. He was the oldest of 9 children. Donald graduated from Waterford High School in 1941, where he designed the official school crest which still appears on the school rings. Donald worked for Reese Knitting Company.

**During Service:**

Donald wished to join the Marine Corp like his father before him, however his eyesight wouldn't allow that, instead he was drafted and assigned to the Army Air Corp. Donald trained to be a radar technician on the P-61 Black Widow. Don was asked to design the insignia for his unit, the 549<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron, which is still used today by the 549<sup>th</sup> Combat Training Squadron at Nellis AFB. On February 28, 1945, Donald's unit landed on the Island of Iwo Jima, only days after the Marines had stormed the beaches. They were assigned to clear up an airfield a few hundred yards behind enemy lines. On the night of March 25/26, the field was hit by mortar and small arms fire; Donald was hit by shrapnel from a grenade and was killed.

Donald rose to the rank of Sergeant, for his ultimate sacrifice he was awarded the Purple Heart, The Bronze Star Medal, and the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal.

**After Service:**

Donald was buried at the Marine Cemetery in Iwo Jima, but his body was later brought home and rests in St. Mary's Cemetery, Waterford. After Donald's death, his family relocated to Malta, where they have since resided. Donald's name is inscribed on the monument at Soldier and Sailors Park in Waterford.