



PFC William J. Grabiarz

**A World War II Hero
from our School's Neighborhood**

(Born 3/25/1925 - Died 2/23/1945)

William Grabiarz served in the United States Army during World War II as a Private First Class in Troop E, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery at Manila in the Philippines, on February 23, 1945. His citation reads: "He was a scout when the unit advanced with tanks along a street in Manila, Luzon, Philippine Islands.

Without warning, enemy machine gun and rifle fire from concealed positions in the Customs building swept the street, striking down the troop commander and driving his men to cover. As the officer lay in the open road, unable to move and completely exposed to the pointblank enemy fire, PFC Grabiarz voluntarily ran from behind a tank to carry him to safety, but was himself wounded in the shoulder. Ignoring both the pain in his injured useless arm and his comrades' shouts to seek the cover which was only a few yards distant, the valiant rescuer continued his efforts to drag his commander out of range. Finding this impossible, he rejected the opportunity to save himself and deliberately covered the officer with his own body to form a human shield, calling as he did so for a tank to maneuver into position between him and the hostile emplacement. The enemy riddled him with concentrated fire before the tank could interpose itself. Our troops found that he had been successful in preventing bullets from striking his leader, who survived. Through his magnificent sacrifice in gallantly giving his life to save that of his commander, PFC Grabiarz provided an outstanding and lasting inspiration to his fellow soldiers." PFC William J. Grabiarz was the first person from Buffalo, NY to be awarded the Medal of Honor in World War II. His Medal was posthumously awarded to him on December 8, 1945.

