

Fields of Honor Memorial

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Fields of Honor
Foundation



Personal info

Full name

FINLEY, William Francis "Bill"

Date of birth

25 June 1924

Age

20

Place of birth

Decatur, Macon County, Illinois

Hometown

Macon County, Illinois

Military service

Service number

16161745

Rank

Sergeant

Unit

**39th Infantry Regiment,
9th Infantry Division**

Awards

**Silver Star,
Bronze Star with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters,
Purple Heart**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

1 April 1945

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Margraten

Plot	Row	Grave
A	14	18

Immediate family

Members

John F. Finley (father)

Irene C. (Smith) Finley (mother)

Marjorie V. Finley (sister)

Jacqueline Finley (sister)

Betty J. Finley (sister)

Charles P. Finley (brother)

More information

William Finley attended St. Patrick's and Roosevelt Junior High School, as well as a year at Decatur High School and was employed at the Victory ordnance plant in Decatur.

He enlisted in Peoria, Illinois on 19 November 1942 and had been overseas since 8 May 1943 and served in North Africa before he was reported wounded in action during the Sicilian campaign for which he was awarded the Purple Heart Medal a first time.

He was awarded the Silver Star Medal. The citation cited: Sgt Finley distinguished himself by gallantry in action against the enemy on 12 December 1944 in the vicinity of Derichsweiler, Germany. While accompanying his company commander on a reconnaissance mission, Sgt Finley was subjected to intense enemy machine pistol fire. Working his way around to the front of the house he then crawled across the roof of a barn despite the fact that he was exposed to the direct observation and fire to the enemy located in the shed of the barn. Opening fire on the shed with his rifle, he then jumped from the roof top and raced to the window of the shed. He threw two hand grenades inside the building and killed two enemy soldiers, neutralizing a mortar observation post.

He is remembered on a memorial plaque on the wall of the city hall of Cherbourg, France.

Photos



Source of information: Ralph Peeters, [NARA](#), [www.wwiimemorial.com](#), [www.ancestry.com](#) - 1930/1940 Census / Family Tree / WWII Enlistment Record, Daily Sitka Sentinel Sitka, Alaska - 27 June 1984, [www.newspapers.com](#) - The Decatur Daily Review

Photo source: [www.findagrave.com](#), John Kusters