

## Purple Hearts & a Bronze Star - WWII hero had to fight to be drafted

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BELMONT — A 94-year-old World War II veteran who received long overdue medals from that conflict yesterday said he had to volunteer to be drafted in order to enter the military.

"I was born in Quebec. You could see the custom house from where I was born. But when I volunteered, the Army wouldn't take me because I was a Canadian citizen," said Rosario Cadorette, who was living in Northfield, Vermont, when he tried to enlist in 1942.

Told that he would have to register with the local draft board and tell them that he wanted to be drafted, Cadorette says he wasted no time in signing up and was soon drafted.

"When you're young, you're gung-ho" says Cadorette, who was a machine gunner with the 13th Infantry Regiment of 8th Infantry Division and saw action in Normandy several weeks after D-Day, and was wounded for the first time on July 23, 1944.

On Nov. 23 that same year, while fighting with his unit in Germany, Cadorette was wounded again, but remained in his precarious position near enemy lines with a more seriously wounded fellow soldier. The next day, despite coming under enemy fire, he was able to help his wounded comrade back to an aid station.

"Acts of heroism like this make a difference. He's a member of the Greatest Generation and I'm very humbled just to be here with him," said U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte as she took part in a ceremony hosted by Charles Kilborn Post 58 American Legion at the Belmont Mill, at which Cadorette was presented with a Bronze Star with a V for valor, as well as an Oak Leaf Cluster, a Presidential Unit Citation, and his second Purple Heart.

As a result of his wounds, Cadorette said he has a metal plate in his head and the remnants of a scar from a bullet that creased his skull. Even though he uses a cane to help himself get around, he remains alert and active, as evidenced by his walking 2 miles earlier in the day before arriving at yesterday afternoon's ceremony.

The event was arranged by Woody Fogg, adjutant for Post 58, who said that when Cadorette, who lives in Canterbury, joined the post last year, he checked his military service record and found out that Cadorette had never received the medals he had earned.

"The honors are long overdue. Like many soldiers, he just got out of the service and went home without even thinking about any medals," said Fogg, who described Cadorette as being "as sharp as a tack."

Fogg contacted Ayotte's staff, which worked with Post 58 to obtain the medals and set up the ceremony.

Cadorette had no idea that the ceremony was going to take place until he arrived.

"We knew that when he saw his family members there he'd know something was up. So I told him what was going to happen. Old soldiers hate to be ambushed," said Fogg.

American Legion officers from around the state, including State Commander John Graham, attended the ceremony, as did Ruth Mooney, chairman of the Belmont Selectmen, who gave Cadorette a big hug and thanked him for his service to the country.

"I'm very humbled. This was a great day and a big surprise. I just want to thank all of you, especially my family, for showing up today," said Cadorette, who was answered from the audience by a call of "We love you."