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A man, whose education was cut short when he was drafted into World War II, is giving back to Utah State University Eastern by establishing an endowed scholarship at the Price college.

Edward Salzetti of Sunnyside, Utah, was barely 18 when Uncle Sam sent him enlistment orders to report to Fort Douglas in 1942. "I was in my freshmen year at Carbon

College when I received my draft notice," he said. "I was majoring in business and working towards my associate degree taking college-prep courses."

Carbon College was just four years old when Salzetti enrolled in classes fall semester. He graduated from Carbon High School in spring 1941 where he played basketball and saxophone for the Dinos.

"At the college, I was playing on the basketball team under Coach George Young, who was also my genetic's instructor. I had J.W. Bingham for chemistry and was enrolled in history and journalism classes taught by Omar Bunnell.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed on Dec. 7, 1941, the United States officially entered the war, Salzetti and most of his friends received draft notices within the next few months. "Uncle Sam called me and told me to report to duty. I tried to go into the Navy, but ended up in the Army."

The now frail 95 year old lives by himself on the east bench in Salt Lake City. His wife Paula Salzetti died in 2014 after 67 years of marriage. With a clear mind and numerous historic war mementos in pristine condition from the war, Salzetti proved to be a wealth of information while describing his life. He quips he has to keep correcting his relative's memories which are all slipping.

Boxes of photos, magazines and newspaper articles are delicately saved to preserve Salzetti's heritage.

Starting in high school documenting his goals and aspirations, he cut and mounted newspaper articles pertaining to achieving success in the business world in a scrapbook.

He chronicled his time in the service with hundreds of black and white photos, remembering where each photo was taken and identifying most of his comrades. He talked about being inside a tank in France when a German developed jet bomber dropped a bomb, killing his best friend, Dalton Morrison from Hodgenville, Kentucky. It destroyed a house and killed a well-dressed French couple who were leaving for church. Salzetti's life was saved by being inside the tank, however his arm was wounded from the flying shrapnel when the bomb exploded.

Discussing his bronze star in his collection of mementos, Salzetti said his 14th Armored Division was in Southern France near Lyon fighting enemy troops when they traveled east towards Germany in the depths of winter 1944. "It was one of the coldest winters on record."

Now known as the infamous Battle of the Bulge, Salzetti and his division were instructed to rescue a platoon of American soldiers in enemy territory. As the tank commander, his comrades traveled by night without lights to not be detected.

Winter was unusually harsh that year with biting-cold wind and record-setting snow. "It was so cold that we found a portable stove and lit it in the tank to stay warm."

Salzetti's crew that was sent to rescue the American troops were bogged down in the ice and mud. His crew modified a Sherman tank, removing the turret to facilitate a "wrecker arm." The special hoist would lift vehicles out of the mud, snow and ice. The tank did not have a hatch cover thus making it even more dangerous and bitter cold inside of it.

"We reached the stranded American soldiers in the middle of the night and brought them back to safety," he said. That was one of my fondest memories of the war, if there is such a thing as a fond memory of war. He recalls throwing hand grenades into lakes and watching fish blow onto the shore. He would pick up the fish to give to the people in the villages to eat.

As the war ended, Salzetti and his division were patrolling the Autobahn in Germany when an attractive female on a bike passed him. She stopped and talked to him, even though he had orders not to fraternize with Germans. The war had taken out all the trains and busses, so everyone rode bikes for transportation. Not many Germans had vehicles and the military was trying to determine who was friend or foe.

In Munich, a few weeks later, Salzetti spotted the same female he had met on the autobahn at a military dance. The rest is history and after the two-year courtship, the former Paula Gah became Mrs. Salzetti at Dreifaltigkeitskirche Catholic Church in downtown Munich.

He was discharged in 1945, but stayed in Germany to help displaced persons from the war in a 1,000-bed United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration facility. His team consisted of a doctor from France, plus nurses from England, Puerto Rico and Great Britain. He said most of the people came from the concentration and labor camps to the NARA.

While at work, he researched historical albums from the concentration camps, plus filled 50-gallon barrels of ashes from those who died in the camps.

By 1946, he was hired to work for the Army Exchange Warehouses in Western Germany. This is where he began his keen business sense that would serve him well when he returned to the states. At the Army Base Retail Store warehouses, he received merchandise from throughout the world and filled orders to all the European PXs. The merchandise were items of value including jewelry, art, furniture, etc. Due to Salzetti's integrity and trustworthy nature, he excelled in this position.

The couple returned to Utah two years later and wanted to move to Salt Lake City. He whispered that as a "Catholic couple," they could not find an apartment for rent because all the apartments available were advertised for LDS couples only.

The Salzettis ended back in Carbon County where Edward secured a job at Kaiser in the maintenance department. They rented the attic of a house in Spring Glen, using orange crates for cupboards and used furniture. They eventually purchased a house a block from Carbon College. Itching to own a business, Edward contacted Orson Gigi in Salt Lake City and purchased a drive-in restaurant with the funds he made from the sale of his house in Price. On 2340 South State, the Salzettis built a Polar King.

While he ran the Polar King, Paula managed the snack bar at O.P. Skaggs grocery store on 400 South.

The Salzettis continued to work and save and invest their money. They purchased real estate, hotels and several businesses. "I did all the bookkeeping until two years ago. I had to stop because my eyes are getting bad," Edward said.

Travel became their pastime as they returned to Europe many times. They also loved traveling to California and even purchased properties there. However, the one place they never visited was Hawaii and that is on Edward's bucket list. He hopes to visit Pearl Harbor some day.

But for now, he says his life is content. On this day he smiled when USU Eastern announced the naming of the Central Instructional Building's theatre ticket booth is being named the Edward and Paula Salzetti Ticket Booth to honor the couple who has and will continue to give to educational institutions so students can complete their education . . . something Edward was never able to do.

~ Susan Polster