

## The Class of 2012 Selects...

### John J. Pinder Jr. (Class of 1931)



“A head for thought profound, unmatched, and clear” is a quote chosen by “Johnny” Pinder for the 1931 Magnet staff to express his thoughts on himself. John also submitted a short story he titled, “On the Road to Bar X” for the Magnet staff to publish as was popular for seniors in 1931. The Magnet chronicled school life in photos and literary prose as well as poetry in those years.

John moved to Butler with his family from Burgettstown, PA when he was young. Graduating from Butler High school in 1931, he was very athletic and like most young men at the time played baseball. In 1935 John signed on to play and pitch professionally with the Butler Indians, which became the Butler Yankees the year later, an affiliate of the New York Yankees. Pinder moved between a number of minor league baseball teams along the east coast until his last professional game in August 1941.

In August of 1941, he registered for the military draft and enter the US Army, January 27, 1942. After training at a number of Military bases including Indiantown Gap, PA. He was assigned to the 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st “Big Red One” Infantry division. He participated in the Allied Landings in North Africa in Algeria as well as the Sicilian campaign in Italy. By 1943 communications Technician Fifth Grade Pinder was in England preparing for D-Day at Normandy Beach. On June 6, 1944, John Pinders’ 32nd birthday he was embarked with his regimental headquarters company in the first wave of troops to hit Omaha beach. As they approached the beach their landing craft was hit with mortar fire and they were disembarked in deep water 100 yards from shore. With gunfire everywhere he grabbed a vital radio and swam to shore. He was wounded in the leg as he came to shore, but that did not stop him as he went back three times across the machinegun racked beach to retrieve essential radios, codebooks and communication parts. A Second bullet ripped through the left side of his face and he still kept going. On his third trip though the surf he was hit yet again with machine gun fire but he struggled on, retrieved the needed equipment and with his last ounce of energy made it to shore.

He died of his wounds later that morning. January 4, 1945, Pinder was posthumously awarded with the Medal of Honor for “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty”. On May 11, 1949, the US Army barracks at Zirndorf, Germany, was renamed Pinder barracks. Today a business park known as Pinder Park occupies the area.