

Ross and foxhole buddy Joe Aloï KIA in the Anzio-Rome-Roccastrada Italy campaign

As bullets cracked overhead and shell fragments whirred noisily through the air, Ross Rajotte and his “foxhole buddy” Joseph V. “Joe” Aloï of Grant City (Staten Island), New York, burrowed into the ground like a couple of badgers in search of prey. Rajotte wrote in his combat journal, *“The dirt was like loose sugar, very granular, made more so by the lack of rain, which made for easy digging.”*

Ross was 24 years old. At 35 years old, Joe was the “old man” of the platoon.

The two men became very close. Rajotte related, *“Joe was always homesick. He was married with a young son and missed his family very much.”*

If Joe was not telling Ross about his wife and son, he was talking about his mother and father.

When Joe joined the company as a replacement after Cassino, the captain paired him up with Rajotte. *“He told me to look out for him.”* Ross says, *“I trained him and taught him what he had to do to stay alive.”*

The two men were huddled at the bottom of their hastily dug foxhole when the Germans mounted an attack. Shouts of, **“pull back, pull back, tanks are coming,”** could be heard up and down the line.

Rajotte could see a **German Mark IV tank** bearing down on their position. Joe jumped up to run and Ross yelled for him to stay down. He tried to keep his friend from leaving the hole, but Aloï pulled away from his grasp and made a dash for the rear.

The tank machine gunner cut Joe down.

Rajotte remained in the fox hole as the tank passed directly overhead. The edges collapsed and dirt poured down the neck of his shirt and into the hole, trapping him, but otherwise he was unhurt. The tank made a ninety-degree turn and headed back up to the ridge. Two men heard Rajotte’s cries for help came forward to pull him out.

Medics took Aloï to an aid station and rushed him to an evac hospital.

Rajotte learned later that Joe Aloï had succumbed to his wounds.

Source: “A Yankee in the Texas Army” by Dennis A. Connole, pp. 169-170.

THE FRONT LINES

MY BEST BUDDIES IN
THE 141ST INFANTRY
COMPANY A. (MCNEILS RAIDER'S)

LT. SANCHEZ TEXAS

SGT GROLLER PENN

PFC BRESNIYAK MASS

PFC ROSEN N.Y.

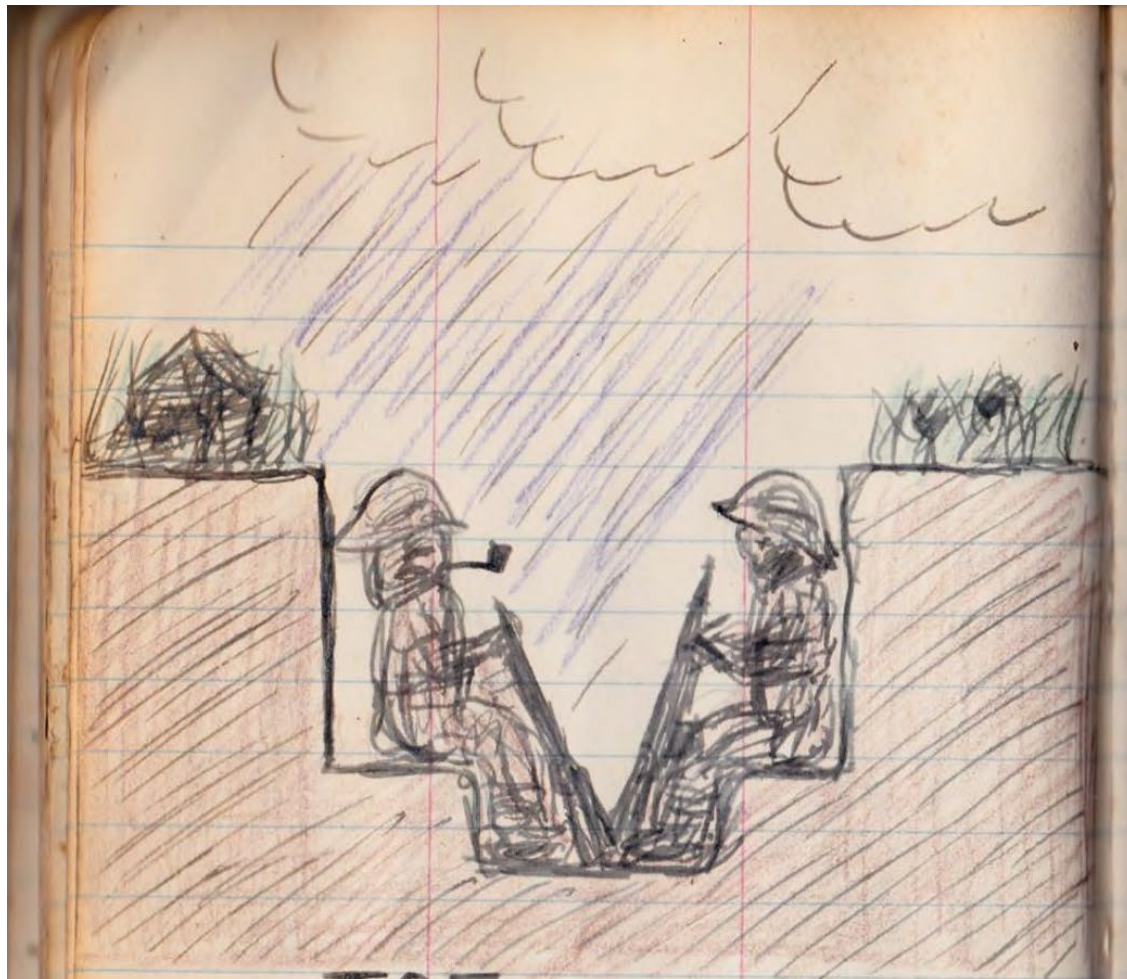
PFC BLOCK CONN

PFC BAGANOFF CONN

PFC RAY VA

★ PFC ALOI NY

PFC FISHER W.VA.



JOE AND I

BEFORE MY PAL JOE ALOI WAS
KILLED IN ACTION IN ITALY

REST IN PEACE
DEAR JOE
AND COMRADE
IN ARMS IN
THE ANZIO ROME
DRIVE TO
ROCASTRADA



HE WAS
MY FOXHOLE
BUDDY
A TRUE
FRIEND AND
UNSUNG HERO

From Rajotte's Combat Journal

THE FRONT LINE'S

ANZIO NETTUNO CEMETERY
8000 SOLDIER'S BURRIED

"My Comrades In Arms"
By Ross Rajotte

Here they rest my Comrades in arms
great warriors and Christian braves
who fought and toil and rest
who now does rest in a foreign grave

MY BUDDIE'S
WHO FELL IN THE
ANZIO ROME ROCASTRADA DRIVE

- ★ SGT NIEPER
- ★ PFC ALOI
- ★ PFC BRANCO