



## Arnold Franco '43

WORLD WAR II VETERAN, BUSINESSMAN, AND AUTHOR

Arnold Franco built his insurance company into a lucrative full-service agency that covered everything from international shipping to health and renters insurance. But he's had even greater impact by sharing his World War II experiences and commemorating the sacrifice of those who never made it home.

A Queens College sophomore at the time Pearl Harbor was attacked, Arnold joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps, a U.S. Army program designed to let students finish their coursework before going on active duty. Sworn in about a year later, he enrolled in summer session to expedite his education. When told to report to Georgia's Camp Wheeler in March 1943, he was a history major 10 credits short of a diploma. But the Registrar's practice of awarding 10 extra credits for future military service allowed Arnold to graduate.

After intensive training in German and cryptanalysis, Arnold was assigned to the Third Radio Squadron Mobile, an elite group of code breakers that followed the army across France. The squadron received a Presidential Unit Citation for its work in intercepting radio messages from the German air force; Arnold mustered out with the rank of corporal and a number of medals for his extraordinary service. Upon returning to the states, he found a job with an insurance company that hired veterans,



and eventually established his own international insurance brokerage firm, Franco & Son, Inc.

He also embarked on his parallel career: documenting World War II and promoting scholarship. Arnold wrote a memoir of his war experiences, *Code to Victory*, established an annual history prize at QC, and discussed the war with students on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2005 France gave its highest award, the Legion of Honor, to Arnold and another member of his squadron. The next year, Arnold donated funds to construct the campus's World War II Memorial Plaza and document the QC servicemen who lost their lives in that conflict. In addition, he underwrote—and participated in—QC's World War II Alumni Veterans Project, which has to date collected oral histories from more than sixty people.