



Edward Joseph "Ed" Kapalla, son of Joseph (1894-1976) and Elizabeth (Bruski) (1896-1967) Kapalla, was born 18 September 1916, Onaway, Presque Isle County, Michigan. He graduated from Onaway High School in 1934 and went on to obtain a teaching certificate at Presque Isle County Normal in 1935. Ed taught school until 8 July 1942 when he enlisted, Grand Traverse County, Michigan, in the U.S. Army. On July 18, 1942 in Onaway Ed married Kathleen "Kathy" T. Mero. The couple's

first born child, a son, was born 28 January 1943, Texas, where Ed was stationed for training.

- Ed's military unit, the 377th Infantry Regiment 95th Division of the 3rd Army, was reorganized in Texas and ordered into active duty in 1942. The 377th was deployed into France during September 1944 and went straight into the Battle of Metz. Metz, France was a highly fortified area defended by outnumbered and outgunned but



extremely motivated German forces. Their defense of this area, from late September to mid-December 1944, delayed the planned forward US attack on Germany and covered their own troop withdrawal from France. There were high casualties on both sides and much of the fighting was house to house.

**Total battle casualties:** 6,591

- **Killed in action:** 1,205
- **Wounded in action:** 4,945
- **Missing in action:** 61
- **Prisoner of war:** 380

It has been said that General Patton and his 3rd Army received a bloody nose in this fight!

The following partial 7 December 1944 battle description was taken from the World War II Today website: <http://ww2today.com/7-december-1944-us-377th-infantry-regiment-street-fighting-schiller-strasse-style> The bone-

weary 377th GI's found no rest and night-guard duty came with constant heart-pounding expectancy.

*The men on guard heard tanks moving around about two blocks to their left front. An 88 whistled in and exploded several yards away from their doorway. Two more came in, in rapid succession, and landed even closer. It was only 15 minutes before the next guards would relieve them, so one of the four guards gladly headed for the cellar stairway to get them.*

*From away off down the town came a faint wail which grew louder and sounded as though it was coming straight at the house. Just as it seemed it would land, the loud siren sound whirred slowly overhead. It was a "screaming meemie" the men thought. They were sure of it when they heard six bursts one right after the other.*

*The new guards appeared and took up the watch silently. They were told in guarded whispers about the tanks and that the ration detail was still out. Outside intermittent rain began to fall, and the dampness gave the hallway a wet-down smell instead of plaster dust.*

*Downstairs, the old guards told of the sound of tanks and the platoon leader phoned the information to the Company CP. The flicker of the candle near the field phone looked good to the men just off guard; the heat from the stove which the squad had rigged up felt even better. One man added another brickette of coal, and a couple of cans of K-ration corned pork loaf were put on to heat. The cellar had junk pushed aside to the walls so the men could lie down. The men lay with all clothing and shoes on, two or three huddled under a blanket or separately in sleeping bags, on all kinds, sizes, shapes and colors of mattresses dragged from one-time bedrooms. Nobody noticed the dirt, plaster and coal dust or the paraffin smoke from burning K wrappers or the stale tobacco smell.*



Ed received a Bronze Star for his battle field contribution at Metz. At the time of his honorable discharge in 1945 he was ranked as a Tech Sergeant.



Mr. Edward Kapalla explains safety measures while using the cutting tools.

After the war Ed and Kathy returned to Michigan where Ed earned a BS degree at Central Michigan University and later an MA at the University of Michigan. He taught in Lake County, Michigan for several years before being employed at Okemos Consolidated in 1953. "Mr. Kapalla" taught Industrial Arts and Mathematics at OHS for 22 years. He retired in 1975. Kathy retired in 1977 from a position with the State of Michigan. Unfortunately in 1980 Ed and Kathy's son, Charles Edward "Chuck", died at age 37, leaving a wife and 3 children.

Both Ed and Kathy were outstanding volunteers in their Lansing neighborhood.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Tuesday 22 February 1994

## Award salutes the best in volunteerism

Ed Kapalla is modest about his vigorous, often grimy volunteer work.

He's the low-key winner of this year's Bea Christy award for unsung heroes: "There were so many people nominated who were much more worthy."

The Christy judges disagree.

Kapalla specializes in trash and flood cleanup around his eastside neighborhood. He finds groceries for needy families and keeps track of senior citizens.

Kapalla is a worthy project for the Lansing Neighborhood Council. It's appropriately one of its annual high notes.

Kapalla's personal involvement is only one example of people taking up the crusade of revitalizing the city.

On Lansing's northside, residents activated cleanup and youth committees. In the Baker Street area, neighbors mounted a "Clean Up and Street Challenge" with the help of Michigan State University students.

That type of activism attracts public attention. But too many quiet good deeds go unreported and unappreciated.

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In case anyone neglected to say so, thanks.

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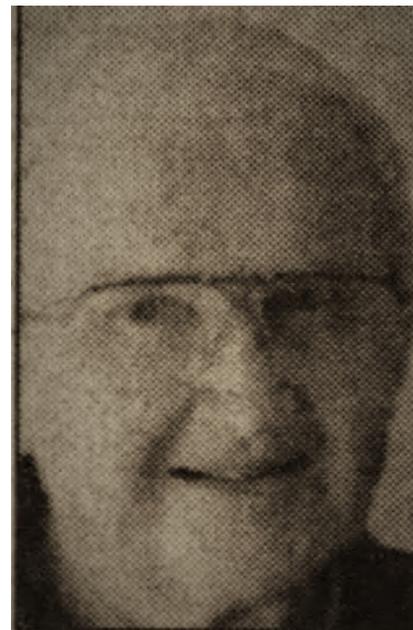
Ed and Kathy celebrated 59 years together and three children; Charles, Margarit and Celeste. Ed died 30 June 2002, Lansing, Ingham County. As of 2017 Kathy was still living. Ed was interred Saint Paul's Cemetery, Onaway, Presque Isle.

*Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Tuesday 2 July 2002*

## **EDWARD JOSEPH KAPALLA**

### **LANSING, MI**

Age 85, died June 30, 2002 in the Hospice House of Mid-Michigan, Lansing. He was born in Onaway, MI to Joseph and Elizabeth (Bruski) Kapalla on September 18, 1916. Mr. Kapalla graduated from Onaway High School in 1934 and Presque Isle County Normal in 1935. He taught in rural schools for 7 years before serving with the 377th Infantry of the 95th Division in France and German, principal battle being the Battle of Metz, where he earned a Bronze Star. Upon discharge as a Tech Sergeant in June of 1945, he



attended Central Michigan University, where he earned a B.S. Degree. Later, he obtained his M.A. Degree from the University of Michigan. Mr. Kapalla taught Industrial Arts, Mechanical Drawing and Math in Luther, MI from 1948-1953 and in Okemos High School from 1953 until retirement in 1975. He was employed by the Capital Area Transportation Authority from 1979-1996. Mr. Kapalla was preceded in death by his son, Charles, on June 22, 1980. He married Kathleen Mero at St. Paul's Catholic Church, Onaway, July 1942. She survives as well as daughters, Margaret Klein of Lincoln, NE, and Celeste (Kevin) Atherton of Sunfield, MI; grandchildren, Charles of Dallas, TX, Christopher of Orlando, FL, Keith of Sunfield, MI and Carrie (Todd) Watkins of Eaton Rapids, MI; 7 great-grandchildren; sister, Virginia Minor of Grand Marais, MI; and brothers, Floyd of Allen Park, MI, and Chet of San Diego, CA. Mr. Kapalla had been a member of the Church of the Resurrection since 1953, the Eastside Neighborhood organization since 1975, the Michigan Education Association and the Neighborhood Watch Organization. He was the 1995 recipient of the Bea Christy Award. The funeral mass will be held Wednesday, July 3, at 11 a.m. at the Church of the Resurrection, 1531 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. The Rite of Committal will be held at a later date in St. Paul's Catholic Cemetery, Onaway, MI.