



From Trenches to Dollars  
by Specialist Jerimiah J.  
Richardson

Darien Ill. - The 416<sup>th</sup>  
Theater Engineer Command  
presented the coveted  
Bronze deFleury award  
which has inscribed in  
Latin, “A Memorial and  
Reward for Courage and  
Boldness” to Mr. John  
(Jack) Roeser on May 13<sup>th</sup>  
2008. The phrase is a close  
representation of Roeser’s  
distinctive accomplishments

as a soldier, civilian engineer and leader of innovative aircraft cockpit control design. Mr. Roeser’s road to success and distinction is a long one with roots all the way back to World War II.

In 1942 John Roeser enlisted in the Army at the age of nineteen to join the ranks of millions Americans fighting in World War II. At the height of the Pacific War, Roeser found himself serving as a Corporal in the 1689<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion as a combat engineer in the largest Pacific battle of WWII, Lete Gulf. He served with distinction fighting and flushing out Japanese infantry in the Philippines and in the Pacific Theater. He then was one of the first U.S. Soldiers to set foot on Japan after their surrender to the Allies in 1945.

After the war Roeser finished his degree at the University of Illinois, Champaign Urbana in engineering and got a job at Hawthorne Works. At the age of twenty-five Roeser built a business in aircraft switchers for Ames. Later after taking out 50 patents he started his own business, Otto Controls, named after his father. Roeser’s company designed components for the Douglas B-36 bomber and used that experience to win a contract with Convair which made him a multi-millionaire. Today Otto Engineering is the largest maker of control switches in aircraft with expansions into farm and industrial machinery.

Jack Roeser has been courageous in battle and consistently bold in business. He’s used his training from men who worked under General Douglas MacArthur who preached the gospel of “statistical control of manufacturing” to turn his experiences from the battlefields of war to success in the business world today. And for these accomplishments he was proudly presented the medal by the commander of the 416<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, Major General Paul E. Crandall.