

Peter Bardach, owned jewelry firm

A refugee from Hitler's Austria, he was a decorated Army veteran of World War II

By **THOMAS J. MORGAN**
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PROVIDENCE — Peter H. Bardach, 90, a refugee from Adolf Hitler's Austria who fought against the Germans in Italy as a U.S. soldier and later ran a jewelry-manufacturing business in Providence, died Thursday at his home in Ocean Ridge, Fla.

Born in Vienna, he left for London in 1938, soon after the Anschluss, the German occupation and annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany. The Bardach family had operated a jewelry business in Vienna for 75 years.

His father, the late Paul Bardach, joined him a few months later, and they came to the United States together in 1939. The next year they founded Bergere Inc., a Providence costume-jewelry company.

Peter Bardach joined the Army in 1943 and was shipped overseas in February 1944 as a replacement for the 13th Infantry Regiment. Serving in military intelligence, he received a Presidential Citation for his work.

In a June 1944 letter to his father Bardach, then a private fighting at the Anzio beachhead, mentioned a "big push" that had been taking place during the previous few days, and said, "I saw real action for

the first time. I saw plenty of it and I admit that I was really scared. But after a while my nerves relaxed somewhat, particularly after I saw that we overcame objective after objective and there is nothing the Germans could do to stop us."

He added, "I think I killed a couple of Jerries myself and my squad got plenty more of them. Even though killing is a real bad thing to do, I always think of the misery the Germans brought to so many people."

After describing how he escorted a number of German POWs to the rear, he said, "I got great satisfaction at having them walk the way I wanted them to. In other words, the tables were turned. Six years ago they were goose stepping into Vienna and they dished it out and I had to take it. Now I dished it out."

Three days after writing the letter, Bardach was hit in the shoulder by a chunk of shrapnel and received the Purple Heart.

He won the Soldier's Medal in 1945 for the dramatic rescue of another soldier, who was drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. The incident occurred about a month after his shoulder wound, from which he was recovering at a hospital in Naples, Italy.

Part of a swimming party at Torre Gaveta, Bardach saw one man swept out to sea by a rip current. Another soldier, Sgt. Charles Ramirez of Texas, swam out to attempt a rescue, but he, too, was overcome by the force of the rip current.

Bardach, "without thought for his own personal safety and despite his condition," dived in and bucked the waters to reach Ramirez, according to an Army news release announcing the award of the Soldier's Medal. By this time, the first soldier had gone under, and Ramirez was unconscious.

Bardach reached Ramirez and took him in tow. But now, he was forced to swim against the current. It took 45 minutes to reach the shore.

Peter Bardach became president of the family jewelry company in 1955, after his father's death. He sold the company to Amtel Inc., but remained with it until he retired in 1977.

He was active in community life in Providence for many years and was particularly proud of his Jewish roots, his family said in a brief biography.

He was president of the Jewish Community Center of the American Jewish Committee of Rhode Island, of the Jewish Home for the Aged, and of the Roger Williams Lodge of B'nai B'rith. He was chairman of the jewelry division of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island. He was a

member of the board of the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Christians and Jews. He was trustee of Temple Beth-El and chairman of the planning committee for the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial.

Bardach was state chairman of the American Veterans Committee, of the Insurance Committee of the Manufacturing Jewelers and Silversmiths of America and of the budget panel for United Way.

Ted Halstead, his son-in-law, said Thursday by telephone from Hawaii, "One thing that amazed me was the surprising number of charities he was the leader of or a major donor to. He really gave back to Providence. He was a member of the greatest generation. It just doesn't get any better than when you escape Hitler, join the Army and win the Purple Heart."

He was the husband of Jacqueline Bardach and the father of four daughters, Marianne Dornfeld, of Boston; Paulette Landes, of Greenwich, Conn.; Veronique Bardach, of Washington; and the late Adele Singer, of Amherst, N.Y. Seven grandchildren also survive him.

The funeral will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday at Temple Beth-El in Providence. The family will receive on Monday from 1 to 4 p.m. at the residence of Marianne and Richard Dornfeld, 11 S. Cottage Rd., Belmont, Mass.

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Bardach



BARDACH, PETER H., 90, passed away peacefully on March 3, 2011, surrounded by his loving family and devoted caregivers.

He was born November 21st 1920 in Vienna Austria, son of Paul & Fredericka Bardach. He escaped after Hitler occupied Austria and came to the U.S. via England. He lived in Providence, RI for 49 years before retiring to Ocean Ridge, Florida. He also maintained a summer residence in Majorca, Spain.

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Mr. Bardach is survived by his wife Jacqueline Bardach. He was the proud father of four daughters, the late Adele Singer of Amherst, NY, Marianne Dornfeld of Boston MA, Paulette Landes of Greenwich, CT and Veronique Bardach of Washington DC. He also leaves seven grandchildren: Miriam, Max and Rebecca Singer, Paul and Micah Dornfeld, and Andrew and Jane Landes.

He will be greatly missed. His funeral service will be held Sunday, March 6th at 2 PM at Temple Beth El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Shiva will be observed at the home of Marianne & Richard Dornfeld, 11 South Cottage Road, Belmont, MA on Monday 1-4 & 7-9 PM. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the charity of your choice. Arrangements by Sugarmen-Sinai Memorial Chapel.