

John A. Mendence



John A. Mendence fought in Norwalk and in New York's Madison Square Garden both before and after World War II as Terry Mendez and John Terriano.

The Norwalk welterweight was born in Providence, Rhode Island, but moved to Norwalk in 1938 and started his ring career a year later. In the next three years, before going into the service, he fought 22 times as a welterweight with 21 wins and one loss. In his stable were several noted fighters of the period, including Lee Q. Murray.

He was a regular on the fight cards at the original Madison Square Garden and trained at Stillman's gym in New York as well.

In the service with the Navy Seabees from 1943 to 1946, Mendence taught boxing to Navy personnel during stints in Hawaii, which surrounded action in the Pacific. One of his proteges was Nick Barrone, who later was to challenge Ezra

Charles for the world's heavyweight championship. Barrone lost in the seventh round KO.

Mendence fought in the heyday of champion Ray Robinson, but he wasn't successful in his efforts to get into the ring with the legendary Robinson.

After the service, Mendence continued his ring career with an additional 14 fights, with 11 victories, two losses, and a draw.

In one episode, Mendence trained for two weeks at Stillman's for a bout with Mickey Zangaris, who promised to obliterate the Norwalker. Mendence beat Zangaris and broke his nose. Later, Mendence was slated to meet Allie Stolcz, a highly rated welterweight in a Madison Square Garden fight, but he was unable to continue and retired before the fight was held.

Earlier in his athletic career, Mendence played third base with the 98th Seabees in Hawaii, where he played against a number of major leaguers in the service and, after the war, played three or four years with the Remington Rand softball team in the Industrial League.

Retired after 40 years as a local carpenter in Local 210, Mendence now enjoys playing golf.

He is married to the former Theresa Sciarra, and the couple resides at 12 Waterbury Road in Norwalk.