

**ledo WALAWBUM Inkangawtaung nhpum-ga shaduzup MYITKYINA**



# The Burman News



Official publication of Merrill's Marauders Association, Inc.

February 2001

## A CHANGE IN THE GUARD / PLACE / PRESIDENT IT'S INDIANAPOLIS IN YEAR 2001

Merrill's Marauders Association will hold its 55th Annual Reunion during Labor Day weekend, August 31-September 2, 2001 at the Indianapolis Marriott North Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Indianapolis, located in the heart of the Midwest, is the site of the Indianapolis Speedway which hosts the annual 500-mile auto race. It also has the Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial, free admission, the Hall of Champions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and a major zoo. Close by is the Medal of Honor Memorial and also free is the Indiana War Memorial with its museum featuring weapons, uniforms, flags and vehicles.

The Marriott North, a new 11-story high rise, lies on the prestigious North Side, 25 minutes from the airport and 20 minutes from downtown. It is situated on a lake, within walking distance of the "Keystone by the Crossing" one of the largest shopping malls in the city containing a number of fast food places, and near several fine restaurants. The hotel has an indoor pool, whirlpool and fitness center. It contains 300 guest rooms, ten especially equipped for disabled, some rooms with

balconies facing the lake.

For one person, the package rate is \$260, for a couple the rate is \$330. The package provides Friday & Saturday nights stay, two breakfasts, two dinners, a Ladies Tea, two drinks per person, tax and gratuity included. Extra night's lodging, August 29 or 30, is \$79, plus tax. Reservations may be made by telephoning **1-800-228-9290** and asking for the Merrill's Marauders group. The room block will be released after August 10, after which the package rates will hold as long as rooms are available. You may use either a credit card or a check equivalent to one night's stay.

A decision on what tours to schedule will be made shortly and advertised in the spring issue of the BURMAN NEWS. Later issues of the BURMAN NEWS will provide further details on the hotel, the city and the program.

Ferdinand Stauch, Reunion Coordinator, Winter phone number 334-948-5220.

### FALL IN

*Here are the latest additions to our assembly. Remember them? Get in touch.*

**JOHN DUNN**, 5307/1/RCT/A CO, CO; 4752/G CO, 1626 LAUREL  
5617 WOODRIDGE DR, AV, COLUMBUS OH 43223, (614)  
HUNTSVILLE AL 35802, (256) 279-3023  
381-6510

**RICHARD SOBCZAK**, 5307/HQ  
CO; 475/1/C CO, 2815 DET/RE, 224 SE SIXTH ST,  
LAFAYETTE RD SW, DANIA BEACH FL 33004,  
HUNTSVILLE AL 35801-3252, **CHARLES SPARGO**, 5307; 475,  
(256) 534-7595 196 COLUMBIA AV, GREENVILLE  
PA 16125,

**KENNETH J KILPATRICK**, 5307,  
1985 COUNTY ROAD 831, CULL-  
MAN AL 35057-1972 **PAUL TONEY**, 5307/3/KCT/CO K,  
PO BOX 803, ELLENBORO  
NC 28040-0803, (828) 453-7552

**CHARLES D PEARCE**, 5307/2/G

### LOST, STRAYED OR STOLEN

Burman News copies returned by Postal Service for some reason to these men at address shown

**WALTER PULKINNEN**, 2731 KINGS,  
BROOKVILLE FL, MOVED LEFT NO  
ADDRESS, Had a ME address previously.

**MILTON SCHWARTZ**, 5307/1/B  
CO/HW, 13955 35th Ave Apt 2A,  
Flushing NY 11354-3507, MOVED LEFT  
NO ADDRESS

## PASS IN REVIEW

Deaths reported recently. Name and Hometown (Where Known), Organization, Where, When Deceased.

**FRANK CAMERA**, 5307/3/OCT, 24 Alpine Dr, East Haven CT 06512-1401, 469-2900, MARIE, March 25, 2000 @ Sal & Susan

**JOHN E CROWLEY**, 5307/3/OCT/HQ, 8 Cherry Ln, Schenectady NY 12302-4422, April 4, 1994 @ Evelyn Crowley

**ANTHONY CYRIL DADO**, 5307/2/I&R PLATOON, 1545 7th St, Green Bay WI 54304-2242, August 21, 1999, @ WIDOW/ROSEMARIE

**PAUL GODFREY**, 475/3/35 QM PK TR, 9502 Lenox Ln, Crystal Lake IL 60014-3337, June 2, 2000 @ SOUND-OFF

**HARVEY W JOHNSON**, RR 1 Box 67, Montgomery PA 17752-9708, (717) 547-2114, 475/3/L CO, October 22, 2000 @ MIRIAM

**JAMES C KANG**, 475/2/HQ/I&R PLAT, 4000 Terra Granada Dr, Walnut Creek CA 94595-4306, June 12, 2000 @ SOUND-OFF

**ELBERT V MC KINNEY**, 5307/1/RCT/A CO, PO Box 31, Sims AR 71969, (870) 867-2108, WID/DINK, October 15, 2000@RANDLE

**WILLIAM E MORTON**, 513 Boswell Ct, Virginia Beach VA 23452, 757-340-0160, April 26, 1999 @ WID/GLADYS

**B T PRESLAR**, 5307/2/GCT, 503 College Ave, Florence TX 76527-4063, PO NOTICE/BN/NOV/00

**ROGER W PRUITT**, 5307/3/KCT/33 QM; 475/3/3 /3, 3017 S 37th St, Kansas City KS 66106-4005, 913-262-6643, February 24, 1998 @Daughter Linda Thomas

**MERLE W ROOSE**, 5307/ARTY; 475, 650 Fairview Pl, Alliance OH 44601-2723, (216) 823-5120, June 20, 1999 @ BARBARA

**TILL G ROSALES**, 5307/3/I Co, 475/3/I, 3338 W Granada Rd, Phoenix AZ 85009-2427, (602) 278-1523, October 3, 2000 @ RVLIONS

**PAUL FRANKLIN ROTH**, 5307/2/MED DET, PO Box 362, Carroll IA 51401-0362, September 2000 @ Creeden

**JACK RUBY**, 5307/3/ Co G; 475/3/Co G, 812 Fairway Rd, Fayetteville TN 37334, July 2000@Jim Stevens

**JAMES R SIMPSON**, 613 FA C BATT, 202 Northcreek Dr, Chandler TX 75758-2315, (903) 849-2899, December 18, 2000, Tucson AZ @ TINCY / WIDOW

**WILLIAM V STEVENS**, PO Box 547, Walthourville GA 31333-0547, September 11, 2000 @ DOROTHY

**RAMON T VELA**, 475/1/B CO/HQ, Myitkyina, Burma, Rio Grande City, Texas, February 2, 1945 @ Niece Stephanie Bonds-Scace

**FRANK W WALTHOUSE**, PFC, 124th Cavalry, Burma, February 2, 1945 @ Doris Miller, Sister, DPMILLER211@aol.com

## SHARING THE STORY

### CENTRAL BURMA CAMPAIGN

*475TH INFANTRY - 124TH CAVALRY UNITS SLASH AT JAPANESE TOWARDS LASHIO*

*(From the India - Burma Theater Roundup, February 10 1945, Sgt Alan Kayes, Field Correspondent)*

FORWARD HQ MARS TASK FORCE - The Mars Task Force swung into action again last week in a lightning pincer attack on Loi Kang and Kawnsing towns, where Japanese had been holding out for two weeks.

The Americans aided by the Chinese 38th Division troops, achieved tactical and strategic surprise, stabbing at Japs in both towns, which are situated about 30 miles south of the MongYu junction of the Ledo and Burma Roads. Simultaneously they slashed at Japs on the hills overlooking The Road in fighting described by former Marauders now with the Marsmen as "the worst yet in Burma".

By evening of Feb 2, Brig. Gen. John P Willey's troops had extended their perimeter nearly a mile south on Hosi Valley ridges overlooking The Road, gaining valuable positions to harass Jap remnants attempting to escape from the pocket.

### ONE MILE LEFT

Mars Artillery plastered The Road in a 21 hour barrage. To the North of the Mars perimeter, Chinese troops established a road block. Consolidation of American positions after two surprise attacks by Mars and Chinese elements left one mile remaining between them and Jap defending the Village of Man Sak.

The route taken by the Mars Force since they slipped into security silence following the Tonkwa engagement in mid-December can now be revealed. At the same time elements of the Mars Force, including the 475th Infantry Regiment which saw action, Texas National Guard Regiment, now fighting as dismounted infantry, can now be identified.

The 475th is comprised of original Marauders, Marauder replacements from the North Burma Campaign and new additions from the States. The 124th has personnel 25% Texan, the balance coming from every State in the Union.

### INTO ACTION

The 475th went into action first. Joined by Kachin Rangers near Bhamo, one unit hit for Swegu, which it reached without opposition, while other troops established a tactical bivouac at Man Tha.

An ambush between Man Haw and Mo-Hlaing resulted in the first American casualties. Pvt Walter C Mink was killed when he crawled out to aid a wounded buddy. Aided by Chinese troops, the Marauders killed two Jap officers and 26 men, capturing two others.

Japs were also encountered at Nga-O, on the Shweli River and one mile south of Kega, where 30 enemy were killed at the cost of one American wounded. At Tonkwa, Mars Artillery, first complete American artillery unit in Burma went into action for the first time. At Mo-Hlaing, the Japs attacked again, our Artillery bearing the brunt of this sortie.

Here a battalion commander was wounded, with Major John Lattin of New Orleans killing the Jap grenadier.

### BY CHRISTMAS

By Christmas Day, advance elements had moved southeast between Tonkwa and Sakan. Relieved by Chinese troops on New Year's Eve, the main body pushed out for Mong-Wi, about 40 miles away, leaving 190 Japs dead at the cost of 13 American lives. By New Year's Day the outfit was in bivouac in the Stilwell River Valley. Another 10 mile mountain march brought them to Mong Hwak.

On Jan. 3 air drops by C-47's of the 10th Air Force began, the last before Mong-Wi. Next day, they passed into Mong-Wi, in the northern Shan States, making another mountain crossing, 4,596 feet high. Many men held onto the tails of the mules on the mountain sides.

Jan. 6, the outfit was bivouacked outside a cemetery near Mong-Wi, partially destroyed by 10th AF bombings. Advance elements were over the mountain and only 20 miles from their objective--the Burma Road.

### TWO DAYS LATER

Two days later the Artillery arrived from over the mountains, after plodding through torrential rain. Sixteen mules were lost enroute. Several days later the 124th Cavalry, which had followed the 475th south of Bhamo, then cut southeast to cross the Shweli River enroute to Kawn Song, had its own troubles with mules. On the 30th day of the march from Myitkyina, they lost 14 mules over mountains as high as 7,800 ft as the unit pushed on over a creek bed.

On a narrow trail 180 feet above a small creek running through a ravine, the trail gave way under the weight of a mule loaded with some 250 pounds of top load and saddle chests. The mule rolled 150 feet in the ravine. This mule, in company with two others who had suffered similar fates, was rescued unharmed the next day.

The rescuers were Sgt Dave More, troop Packmaster of Jacksboro, TX, aided by S/Sgt Amos Martin, Mess and Supply Sgt and T/3 "Polly" Pollings of Bartlett OH. In combination with some Artillery men, they hacked a trail of steps, one-half mile long in a gradual incline from the ravine

to the trail. Another mule which had also fallen off the trail was left behind with a broken neck.

### AT MONG WI

Back at Mong-Wi the units were filtering in to comprise the force that would make the final push for the Burma Road. Lt Richard Hawkins of Minneapolis, former Minnesota Halfback, arrived with a chicken perched on his pack, having fed it with cereal and oats until it fattened up for a machete operation. Another unit brought along a cow which meant fresh meat.

Col. William Osborne, Los Angeles CA, a veteran of fighting with Philippine Scouts on Bataan early in the war, was named CO of the 124th, Col Ernest Easterbrook headed the 475th in a shift of commands. Other units were brought in for the mission to cut the Burma Road through a thrust at Hosi, thus helping secure the Ledo-Burma Road for convoy traffic, and at the same time cutting off the retreat of Japs who had fought at Mong Yu and were now retreating towards Lashio, 105 miles to the southwest. On Jan. 13, advance units pushed out in the final phase of the drive to the positions they now hold.

The men were in good spirits, their morale high, despite the 22 hour forced march that lay ahead. They plodded for 11 hours over the mountains to Ho-Pong, 13 miles away. Some marched by linking hands as they crossed treacherous bogs, swamps, creeks and precipices. By Jan. 17, the day they reached their positions, they had traversed 16 miles of mountains in 35 hours, with one two-hour rest period to break the march.

### AT NAMHKAM

At Namhkam, advance units of the 475th ran into their first Japs when S/Sgt Ernie Reid, an ex-Marauder, and S/Sgt Chester Wilson, acting as lead scouts, flushed out a nest of Japs masquerading as villagers. Wilson fired a Tommy Gun from the hip, killing the first Jap as he stepped from behind a tree. Reid killed the second one. To Wilson goes the credit for the first Jap killed by an American in the new Burma Road thrust.

On the 19th, the battle for the Burma Road was on in earnest. The 475th had marched more than 300 miles to the objective, sometimes on short rations

when airdrops failed, and traversing mountains as high as 6,700 feet.

The 124th went into action on the 19th after a 279 mile march, traveling over four mountain ranges, including the 7,800-foot Lol-Lun range, and reached their objective south of Kawn-song on empty stomachs. Ahead of them lay a 1,200-foot climb up the steep side of the Hosi Valley, which they made without eating, when terrain again prevented an airdrop. They attacked their objective the next morning, one man going into the fight on a breakfast of vitamin pills, others eating Jap rice and biscuits after the attack.

### OUTFIT'S METTLE

Between Jan. 19 and Feb 7 which found the Mars Task Force perched on positions commanding the Burma Road, the outfit proved its mettle. Tired, unshaven, unwashed men, fought on the perimeter without water; others used mortar shell cases, canvas parachute bags, and ammo bags to haul water on their backs and by mule to men facing the Japs.

Willey paid tribute to the men last week following the capture of Loi Kang and Kawnsong.

"The Mars Task Force has covered the most hazardous terrain in Burma ever traversed by an American unit. A magnificent job of marching over rugged mountains, followed by an equally magnificent job of fighting. The morale is unbelievably high. They did, and are doing a grand job and I feel very proud to command a unit of this caliber," he said.

### CONSTANT ACTION

From the time the 124th first hit the Burma Road they have been in constant action. Pfc Sam Hightower, Toombsboro GA; James D. Ivy, Crosby MS; Jack R. Munson, Baton Rouge LA; Kenneth J. France, Cedar Rapids IA; and Platoon Sgt William Scott, Cleveland, TN, were first on The Road by Jan. 20th. They killed 12 out of a 19-man Jap patrol.

Since then the outfit has improved its position despite Jap mortar and artillery fire. During the day the Mars Artillery shelled heavily with mortars and artillery. At dusk the Nips counter-attacked, after barrages.

Meanwhile Mars patrols mined the Burma Road, set up road blocks with vehicles their artillery had destroyed.

That's the way the fighting goes as the Japs are pushed toward Lashio.

Portable surgical outfits have done yeoman service. Frequently men fighting on the perimeter have been given first aid or evacuated from liaison plane strips under enemy fire. Sgt Carl W. Hughes of Sheldon IL made seven landings and departures in five hours under fire, taking out 28 men.

Litter bearers, mostly Shans, are now working for rations and without pay. Led by Pvt Albert W. Gomez of San Francisco and Pvt John Keenan of Chicago, they expedite evacuations.

That's the story of Mars to date. Since taking off from Myitkyina 11 weeks ago, they have killed 783 Japs. Taken a handful of prisoners. That word "handful" graphically illustrates how savagely the Mars Force has fought in its drive to cut the Burma Road.

*(Story provided by Cyril A Stone, 475/HQ/1 & R Platoon, 26555 Glick Dr, Elkhart IN 46514-6039, 219-264-7061)*

*(From the India-Burma Theater Roundup, February 22, 1945, Sgt Alan Kayes, Field Correspondent)*

#### **HQ, MARS TASK FORCE**

February 2 was one of the big days in the attempt of the Mars Task Force to cut the Burma Road as they drove towards Lashio.

On that day, Lt Col George T Laughlin of the 124th Infantry and Lt Col Loren D Pegg of New York went along as observers with three platoons. At the jump off the platoon leader and platoon sergeant were wounded. Laughlin and Pegg jumped into the breach. Laughlin taking over two squads, Pegg the third, designating themselves as sergeant and corporal respectively. They advanced with the platoon to its objective.

Sgt Clyde M Stockton of San Antonio, TX started up the hill in the same engagement carrying an M-1, a grease gun (the new all-metal .45 caliber submachine gun) and a pistol.

As this walking arsenal advanced up the hill, his platoon leader's M-1 gave out. Stockton swapped the M-1 for the one he carried and proceeded up the hill, firing as he went. Pvt John Valdez, of Houston, yelled that his M-1 had jammed, so Stockton swapped rifles with him and continued firing his grease gun. When he

ran out of ammo, Stockton ran to a wounded man, picked up a carbine, jammed it into a pillbox, and fired until the magazine was empty. He ran back for rifle grenades, dropped by one of his own men, borrowed another M-1 that was working, picked up a musette bag of carbine ammo from still another wounded man, and went on leading his squad, ending up on top of the hill with all his guns and part of his carbine ammo left.

"I didn't see any reason for throwing an M-1 away -- I knew the fight would be over and I could repair it," he explained afterwards.

#### **REAL TEXAN**

Another Texas sergeant from Houston, whose mother is a Staff Sergeant in the WAC, went into action carrying a Lone Star State flag tied to his rifle, which he intended to plant on the hilltop. He started up the hill as a mortar observer, but when the telephone wire ran out he went on as a rifleman. He grenaded two pillboxes, joined Stockton in a melee in front of a nest of pillboxes and caught shrapnel in the leg when a Jap grenade burst in front of him.

He killed the Jap with his rifle as he fell to the ground, and then was carried down the hill to an aid station. Twice he sneaked out of the aid station and started up the hill with the flag in his hand, and each time the aidmen caught him and dragged him back. They took him to a Portable Surgical Hospital where they kept him overnight, but released him the next morning and back he went with the flag.

But he didn't plant it on the hilltop. His CO finally prevailed upon him to plant it some place else, explaining "It's too large a flag and too bare a hill and besides the Yankees in the outfit who fought just as hard as you Texans did, won't like it."

#### **YANKEES THERE, TOO**

And there were many Yankees fighting in the outfit side by side with their battle-happy Texas buddies. A bazooka gunner, from Cincinnati, threw away his bazooka when it failed to work, picked up an M-1 and a handful of grenades and went into the attack with the rest of his troop. When they reached their objective, he became an aidman and litter-bearer, and although untrained in first aid, did what the medics called an amazing job. He

was killed by a Jap sniper as he helped evacuate a patient down the hill to the squadron aid station.

Pfc Albert Z. Sutton, of Chicago, a mild-mannered troop clerk who was a writer in civilian life, asked for line duty to be near a buddy. When another friend was shot down right before his eyes, Sutton went berserk. He grabbed a grease gun and went from pillbox to pillbox, blasting Japs. He ignored a Jap Namboo Machine Gun which was firing at him at point blank range, killed the gunner and accounted for four more Japs. He arrived at the objective unscathed, but pale and shaken by the experience.

#### **KNOCK ON HEAD**

Sgt Kim Hill of Champaign, IL, a former U. of Illinois student, was fired on by a Namboo, jumped into a foxhole he had just grenaded and landed on a live Jap. Hill couldn't reach his own bayonet, so he grabbed the Jap's sword with his right hand and wrestled with him for possession. The Jap armed with a percussion type grenade, pounded it on Hill's forehead to set it off and kill them both. Hill clawed it from the Nip's hand, tossed it away as it exploded, then stabbed the Jap in the throat with his own sword.

Lt Leo C Tynan, Jr of San Antonio, went along with the troop of Lt Jack Knight of Mineral Wells, TX, as a field artillery observer. He had specifically requested the assignment. As they went up the hill together, with Knight blasting pillboxes and shouting encouragement to his men, a Jap tried to bayonet the troop leader but Tynan killed the Nip.

Later Tynan reorganized the platoons, re-establishing communications, then led them on in an attack on a new objective under heavy artillery fire.

#### **OFFICERS PRAISED**

One enlisted man, as he came off the trail leading from the perimeter, remarked, "Our officers have done some of the god-damnedest fighting I've ever heard of in my life."

He had just seen Capt William Wood, another Texan, and leader of a combat column, pick up a 30-caliber machine gun which had lost its mount as a result of a direct hit. He picked up the machine gun and led his troops up the hill, firing at pillboxes from the hip, sometimes brac-

ing the gun in the crotch of a tree. He finally ran out of ammo. Reorganizing his units, he found that his artillery observer had been killed, so Wood contacted Mars artillery on his own radio, using cavalry talk, and directed fire on Jap positions by compass, gun direction, shell strikes and any other means that came to mind. So successful was Woods in his sensing that artillery used his directions as a concentration number and knocked out Jap positions completely.

#### **SIDE BY SIDE**

There were other officers who fought with distinction side by side with their men. A lieutenant from Minneapolis, twice wounded veteran of the Myitkyina campaign, and wearer of the Silver Star, had killed his first Jap in the new campaign on January 19th, when he led his troop to an objective in a dusk attack. He volunteered for a combat patrol mission on February 4th, and the 29 year old Lieutenant was the first to go down under Jap sniper fire.

Major George B Jordon, of Douglas AZ, led his troops forward into high ground near Kawnsong, after Mars artillery laid down an intensive barrage. His group was the "Blue Chips" Column -- each man distinguished by the blue poker chip worn on a string around the neck. Jordon and his men gained their objective in the bitter fighting in this area, in time to hear Lt Col Caifson Johnson, former professional wrestler of Minneapolis, radio to Major John Lattin, another Column Commander: "Come on up, John, I have a new home for you." Johnson had moved his men across the floor of the Hosi Valley at dawn, and then up a 2,000 foot mountain to reach Loi Kang.

Heroism wasn't confined to men in the line. A Brooklyn G.I. had tried his best to lead a mule, but just couldn't handle the animal. He pleaded to stay with the outfit, so they made him an aidman. He gave his life on Feb. 2, when he crawled out beyond the perimeter to rescue an enlisted man wounded and pinned down by fire.

#### **LOSES HAND**

At Tonkwa, a Staff Sergeant picked up a grenade tossed at him and tried to throw it back but it exploded and tore away his hand. He didn't want sympathy. "Hell, I only lost a hand," he said at the hospital,

"My buddy lost is life."

Pfc Arthur Affeldt, of Alexander MN, had better luck in the fighting for the hill position on the second of February. Affeldt moved up with his unit, picked up a discarded grenade made of a TNT block, just in case he might need it. Advancing uphill, he was fired on by a Namboo, so he rolled to one side and continued to crawl upwards, watching his unit follow him up the hill. He finally maneuvered behind a small ridge which protected him from fire, then crawled close enough to use the improvised grenade. He saw at least one dead Jap as he passed the position.

#### **ANOTHER TEXAN**

Sgt James L. Speck of McKinney TX, also did well with grenades in the same encounter. While the rest of his squad was pinned down by fire, he circled a Jap position and neutralized it with a grenade, killing two Japs. A Namboo opened up on him not 10 feet away but he threw his grenade as he turned, killing a Jap and silencing the gun. He continued uphill another 30 yards, still under fire, and threw a grenade into another Jap position, getting two more Japs, and knocking out another Namboo. As he threw this grenade, a Jap rifleman in a slit trench five yards away, jumped up, fired at him and missed. That gave Speck time to aim his carbine and kill another Jap. Pinned down once again by automatic weapons fire, Speck crawled to three men who had been wounded in the burst of fire, and rolled them down the hill out of range of the weapons. Here he gave them first aid and saw to it that they were evacuated. As the wounded were carried off, Speck saw a man from an ammo pack train go down, shot by automatic weapons fire. Speck crawled over to him under fire and moved him out of danger, then administered first aid.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

Following a reorganization of his platoon and re-issue of ammo, Speck went out again this time with Lt Thomas Farley, to take a large fortified position apparently a Jap Command Post. Approaching from different angles, Speck and Farley liquidated the men holding that position. When his outfit reached the objective, the men came under sniper fire. So once

again, Speck became an aidman and evacuated more wounded under fire. He has been recommended for decoration and citation.

Pfc John Sebastian, of St Louis MO., a squad leader found two of his men wounded beyond the perimeter, while his position was under fire. Directing the rest of the squad to concentrate their fire on a pillbox from which sniper fire was coming, Sebastian crawled out beyond the perimeter and hauled the two men back to safety and medical aid.

Pvt Robert Rymp of Topeka, KS, made his attack standing up in the face of enemy fire, shooting a grease gun with one hand and tossing grenades with the other. Afterwards he said, "I was just doing what everybody else did." But his covering fire and the accuracy of his grenade throwing, made possible the elimination of several Jap positions by men in his squad.

*(Story provided by Cyril A Stone, 475/HQ/I & R Platoon, 26555 Glick Dr, Elkhart IN 46514-6039, 219-264-7061)*

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#### **ABOUT A FATHER**

God saw he was getting tired,  
And a cure was not to be:  
So he put His arms around him,  
And whispered, "Come with me."  
With tearful eyes, we watched him suffer,  
And saw him fade away.

Although we loved him dearly,  
We could not make him stay.  
A golden heart stopped beating,  
Hard working hands to rest:  
God broke our hearts to prove to us,  
He only takes the Best!

*Charles S Atkins from Mrs Jerry Atkins*

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**The best way to make your car run better is to check out the prices of the new ones.**

---

How do you communicate with a fish? *Drop him a line.*

---

When can you tell if an ocean is friendly? *When it waves.*

## LETTERS TO EDITOR

### EDITOR

My Husband, Mitchell S Starsiak, 2 Bn, Blue CT, passed away on March 25, 2000. He was always so proud to be part of your organization. Probably one of his most treasured accomplishments. Part of his Obituary follows: In 1941, prior to W.W.II, he enlisted in the Army and served at Ft Clayton in Panama. In 1943, he joined the 1st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop in Puerto Rico. Later that year, he volunteered to serve with the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), 2nd Bn, Blue Combat Team - famously known as Merrill's Marauders. In 1944, his unit was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for their service in the China-Burma-India Theater. He completed his military service in 1945 with a Military Police unit in New York City.

Eileen & Michelle Starsiak, 93 Daniel St, Carteret, NJ 07008-2045, Starsiak1@cs.com

### EDITOR

Since my discharge from the Army in 1946, I had no idea that such an organization as yours existed. In all these years I have had no contact with anyone connected with the 5307th.

I remember being in a Heavy Weapons Company but no battalion is listed on my discharge.

When I got out of the hospital in Ledo, I was assigned to the Northern Combat Area Command through no effort of mine. I then lost touch with my outfit in the 5307th and never knew anything about them or your organization. Now that I am an old man and not able to be as active as I would like but I still would like to keep in touch. LAUREN SOLOMON, 3185 Arlene St, Portage IN 48368-3939.

### EDITOR

I would greatly appreciate it if you could indicate in the next newsletter that the article will be coming out in the near future in WW II Magazine. The title is 'THE OTHER WAR IN BURMA, The Generals vs. the

Marauders and the Chindits." Jim Hopkins gave me rave notices after reading it, wants to figure some way to make it part of the official record. RICHARD HALE, 475/3/HW/ASST MG, 1196 Sand Castle Rd, Sanibel FL 76049-5703, 941-472-4590

### EDITOR

It is with my utmost sorrow, that I write to inform you that Joseph B Yohe has passed away on 6/22/00. He was with the 5307/2 Bn; 475/2/Co E/4th Squad. He was in the Battle against the Japanese at the Myitkyina Airfield and I joined after the airfield was taken. Then the 475th Infantry Regiment was formed and we were both in the same squad. After the war, I looked him up through the Social Security and of course, we became friends again. We met numerous times, called each other on the phone. We visited the War College in Carlisle PA. We also went to the Military History Institute where I wrote about my activities with the Merrill's Marauders and the 475th Infantry. Men who visit can write their experiences and then place it in a packet and put it in the drawer they have established for the purpose. Several men have taken advantage of the opportunity to do this.

I will miss him because we went through a lot while in Burma and we also met in China. We planned on going to a reunion if it was going to be in Pittsburgh. Sincerely, STANLEY YARULIS, 605 Thompson Av, Clairton PA 15025-1042

### EDITOR

Hi Gentlemen:

I have always admired the Merrill's Marauders who made extreme sacrifices and contributed so much to the war effort. They are all heroes. I was Master Sergeant in charge of personnel of the 14th Evacuation Hospital located at Mile 14 of the Ledo Road in Assam, India. The Marauders passed our unit in the spring of 1944 on their way to take part in the North Burma campaign. Some stopped for medical treatment, refreshments, to water their mules and chat. We heard they were among the army's best and

toughest fighters. They sure proved it.

Our unit trained at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana before the Pearl Harbor bombing. We were sent to India, in the summer of 1943, to construct and operate a bamboo hospital. We also set up aid stations in the jungles of Nawng Yang, Tagaung, Ngaland and Changrang where food and medical supplies were provided through air drops. In 1944 we operated a 50 bed hospital at Khalak Ga to treat wounded Chinese, men from a brigade of Wingate's Chindits, Nagas and Kachins.

Shortly after the Marauders arrived in Burma, we received hush orders to set up a Branch Hospital at the Staging Area in Margarita. Soon we cared for 1500 Marauders. Many, wounded, worn out and disease ridden, were flown from the battle area to our hospital. When they arrived, those able to walk made a bee line for the showers before devouring hot meals. Some required surgery while others suffered from malaria, dysentery, jungle rot and mite typhus. As the number of patients increased, our medical officers and enlisted men voluntarily worked double shift. Convalescent Marauders volunteered to help in the wards and kitchen. Replacements finally took over.

Our hospital received a personal commendation from General Merrill and a Meritorious Serve Plaque from the Commander of United States CBI Forces. A citation reads, "During the monsoon of 1944, this hospital although operating as a 750-bed unit, handled as high as 2,900 patients at one time, 1500 of which were Merrill's Marauders. "Operating under the most trying conditions, and faced with a shortage of material and equipment, this organization performed its mission. The record established by the personnel of this hospital both in the medical and surgical skills and in the maintenance of an exemplary unit reflects great credit upon the personnel of the 14th Evacuation Hospital and the United States Army."

I met with General Merrill several years after the war ended. He was in

Philadelphia speaking to a group at the Bellevue Hotel. During our brief visit, we recalled mutual memories. He was a good person and a great American. I will always remember that meeting.

About twenty years ago, we formed a 14th Evacuation Hospital Reunion Group. We met, each year at different locations - Louisiana, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, New York, Florida, Atlantic City and others. We started with over 100 members. Two years ago, when our membership dropped to 30, we stopped meeting. Our treasury will be donated to the World War II Memorial to be built in Washington, DC. I greatly enjoyed your Web Site and am happy to share some of our experiences. Milton A. Eisenberg, 7622 Front Street, Cheltenham, Pa., 19012. (215) 635-7167.

#### **EDITOR**

Answering that question about being on the list of Good Medal recipients, which I was not on. The answer is simple. I had already received that medal. During the 16 months I had been in the States before going overseas, I had a chance to show I was a good boy. I remember a fellow soldier at Fort Reno, Oklahoma, saying "It is easier to follow the rules than to break them". That was the army remount depot, a sort of warehouse for horses and mules. Probably some of the mules, the Marauders used had their "Basic Training" at Fort Reno.

All the while the Marauders were on the road to Myitkyina, my unit was in Fort Reno. We read about the Battle of Myitkyina but paid more attention to the Landings in Normandy. Life for us at Fort Reno was very easy. More like being a guest at a dude ranch. And paid for being a guest. Not till late June of 1944, after the transfer to the Cavalry Replacement Training Center, did we at Fort Reno realize we were in the army.

That was called a "refresher" course. Three days a week were a little easier. Training at 0600 in the evening those days. The other days training till midnight. Sundays were free and

by Sunday evening, we did not know what to do with our surplus energy. Sometimes it resulted in mischief. I look forward to receiving the BURMAN NEWS. ERNEST HUBACKER, 475/3/Hq/3 plat, 524 2nd St NE, JAMESTOWN ND 58401-3600

#### **EDITOR**

I am reading 'SPEARHEAD' by James E.T.Hopkins and John M Jones. This is the best about the 5307th.

I was one of the many New Galahads who didn't know what was going on or if anybody cared. Landed at Myitkyina Airfield last week of June and went back to airfield by oxcart July 16. Ended up at 20th GH in Ledo. Spent the rest of my time in New Delhi, C.B.I. Headquarters - guard duty, mail carrier. Arrived home February 1946. DONALD KEENE, PO Box 35, West Poland ME 04291-0035, 5307/209 Engrs.

#### **EDITOR**

I was in Co G, 475th Infantry and walked from Camp Landis to Loi Kang Hill. Got sick with Typhus and was flown back to the 69th General Hospital for about 3 months. Then I went to NCAC near Lashio. I was assigned to a Chinese Trucking Company, hauling rations to Hsipaw for Chinese troops till the "A" bomb was dropped. RALPH G MILLER, 10 Gloucester St, Harrisburg PA 17109, 717-545-1978.

#### **EDITOR**

The company that I was in was short a Lieutenant. So the Colonel promoted the 1st Sgt to 2nd Lt. I got the 1st Sgt job because I was Regular Army. So the Colonel said. I didn't argue. When we came out of Myitkyina there was 34 men left. Major Lew was the Company Commander and I was back to Platoon Sgt. Two days later we were evacuated. Major Lew said we were no longer an effective combat force. I volunteered to be a baker on the return ship, made bread. I ate good all the way home. Last word I had with Col Beach was when he came into the bakery and said, "Platoon Sgt, 1st Sgt, Ships

Baker, what next?" I said, "Civilian". Then I went back in for the Korean War, made two tours. Later I worked for the Commanding General of Berlin, I was the NCOIC at "Checkpoint Charlie" for five years. Got order to return to the States. The General said, "Sgt get out now. They are pulling all you old soldiers out of Berlin and Germany. They are going to send all you old soldiers to Viet Nam, so they don't have to pay your pensions." He was right. Every few days at Fort Jackson three or four men received Viet Nam orders. I went in and put in for retirement. Two days later my name was on the board to ship out. I got out in September 1966 - 25 years. PAUL SWOGER, 5307/3/OCT/K CO/PLAT SGT, 704 Whispering Palms Dr, Las Vegas NV 89123

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## **CARRYING THE TORCH**

Torch Carriers, some new and some old. Honorary Members that are in touch.

**WALTER BERTRAND**, Son; **KATHY BERTRAND SMOTHERS**, Daughter, in MEMORY OF **FELIX BERTRAND**

**MARTHA JACKSON**, 311 83rd Ave NE, Saint Petersburg FL 33702-3831, (813) 577-5166, IN MEMORY OF **ROBERT JACKSON**.

**MRS FRANCES LEW**, 2117 Glasgow Dr, Ceres CA 95307-1628, (209) 537-6471, WID/MAJOR LEW

**SUSAN POGUE**, 1423 Monroe Ave, Winthrop Harbor IL 60096-1542, (847)872-4336, SJPFYI@aol.com, DTR/WM.ROYCE, IN MEMORY OF **WILLIAM ROYCE**.

**MARY INGLIS SIMS**, 524 San Antonio Way, Sacramento CA 95819-2712, (916) 457-2853, inglis@pacbell.net, WID/FELIXBERTRAND

**LINDA THOMAS**, 40121 Pleasant Valley Rd, Lane KS 66042-4116, 785-869-3148, DAUGHTER/ **ROGER PRUITT**

## OFFICERS ROW

### **PRESIDENT EMERITUS: PHILIP B PIAZZA**

Mr Piazza has provided a written resignation letter which was sent to all the Directors. He has also agreed to continue his liaison work with the Ranger organizations as our President Emeritus.

A new President will be elected at the next reunion. If interested in serving the membership in the position, be prepared to run for the office at the election.

### **HISSTORIAN: BOB PASSANISI**

I am prepared to cover the duties of the President until a new one is elected at the Reunion.

### **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: RAY LYONS**

I have forwarded to China the forms requested by the Stilwell Research Center in Chungqing.

Postage rates have gone up, thereby increasing the costs of this office. At the recent Board of Director's Meeting, Huntsville Reunion, Treasurer Clofine in an effort to reduce these costs, recommended that the Membership Directory be printed every two years instead of annually as has been the practice. It was objected to by me but the Board voted for the proposal.

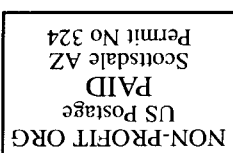
## SPEARHEAD

*New Edition Now Available —  
same price \$15 +mailing costs \$5*

Two new books which may be of interest to Marauders and family. One by Shelby Tucker is called "**AMONG INSURGENTS**" is about an American now living in England who hiked from China to India with the help of friendly Kachins. Unofficial journey but covered parts of Burma that we went through. It explains a lot about the daily lives of the Kachins. Also provides an English translation of Burmese names of villages, mountains, rivers, etc. I learned that Myitkyina means "Near the Big River". Why didn't we think of that? We have copies available ... Price \$30.

Also "**VINEGAR JOE'S WAR. STILWELL'S CAMPAIGNS FOR BURMA.**" by Nathan Prefer. It's about us. He acquired personal stories from us men and they are in this book. Price \$30. Available from me.

Logan Weston's Family has requested that I advise the membership that his book, "**THE FIGHTING PREACHER**" has been reprinted by ALEXANDER BOOKS. Cost \$16.95 each. Shipping & Handling \$4. for 1 book - \$2. for each additional book. 5% sales tax on S.C. orders. 6% sales tax on N.C. orders. Mail payment by Check or Money Order to Col Logan Weston, PO Box 1796, Ft Mill SC 29715. Direct Credit Card Payment to ALEXANDER BOOKS, 65 Macedonia Road, Alexander NC 28701. Phone Orders 1-800-472-0438. FAX 828-255-8719. Homepage <http://www.abooks.com>. E-mail: [sales@abooks.com](mailto:sales@abooks.com).



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