



The Burman News



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A REUNION AMONG FELLOW RANGERS - IN COLUMBUS, GA

This year's Reunion of Merrill's Marauders Association, our 57th, promises to be a very exciting one. It will be held August 8-10 at the Wyndham Hotel, Columbus, GA., right next to Fort Benning where the U.S. Army Rangers, our modern counterparts, maintain their school, headquarters and home battalion barracks. Other members of the 75th Ranger Regiment are overseas on operational duty.

Important. Note, first, that this Reunion will not be on Labor Day weekend, as in the past, but three weeks earlier to take in the graduation ceremony at the Ranger School. Second, the cut-off date for reservations is earlier too, July 11th, so this is the last issue of Burman News to appear before then. And third, the highlight of this Reunion will be a day in Fort Benning, traveling by chartered bus, for which your reservations also must be made early. See below for telephone numbers to reserve your place, and hotel rates.

The hotel this year, the Wyndham, is located in downtown Columbus, at Front Avenue and 9th Street, across from the Trade Center, River Center for the Performing Arts, River Walk and Coca Cola Space Center. Nearby are many small, reasonably priced restaurants, some with outdoor seating as well as occasional entertainment.

If possible, plan to arrive by Thursday, August 7th, because the next day, Friday morning, August 8th, a bus will be chartered at a nominal fee for what promises to be a memorable visit to Fort Benning, only 10 minutes away. This will take in the Ranger Memorial, then a "Rangers in Action" demonstration beside a nearby lake, followed by the graduation ceremony at the Ranger School. Then on to the Ranger Training Brigade Headquarters, and the Ranger Hall of Fame there, where 21 Marauder heroes are among those permanently honored with pictures and citations, followed by lunch in the Ranger Mess Hall, which will be held outside if the weather is nice.

To get in on this Benning visit, Phil Piazza says that it is very important that you notify him - phone or fax 864-972- 3239, or e-mail marauder1@trivergent.net --so that he will know how many buses to order. No last-minute reservations.

It is also important to make reservations early for the Reunion itself because the cut-off date for that has been set for July 11th. The package deal for the main days of the Reunion, August 8-10, will as usual include Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, Saturday night cocktail party, Saturday banquet and Sunday morning brunch, as well as the ladies reception.

The total package, including all taxes and gratuities, is, for a single, \$235.14; two people, \$299.28; three people, \$363.42, and four, \$427.56. Additional nights for room only will be \$79 plus tax. No charge for parking. The hotel reservations telephone number is 706-324-1800 (no 800 number) Say you are member of the Merrill's Marauders group. The hotel has complimentary shuttle service from the Columbus airport, available by phone from the airport.

DIARY OF RAYMOND LA PIERRE, 5307/3 BNI CO

JAN 1: Returned from leave; now on train leaving Baltimore for Shreveport LA.

JAN 2: Arrived in Shreveport LA. Took bus to Alexandria, then to maneuver area where I resume maneuvers training with 97th Division, 386th Regiment, B Co

JAN 18: Took troop train to De Ridder LA to return to garrison.

JAN 20: Arrived in Fort Leonard Wood MO at 1900

JAN 21 TO APR 10: Cook in Kitchen B Co, 386th Infantry, spent several weekend passes in Jefferson City and St Louis MO. My Mother and Grandmother visit me for several days March 26th.

APRIL 10: On volunteer list for overseas duty (Jungle fighting), Elmer Propst, Barrineau, Koffman, Caron, Sgt Tinsky also included. We left Ft Leonard Wood at 1200 M, board troop train pass through Ohio, Indiana, W VA, VA, Washington DC, and Baltimore Md to Ft George G Meade.

APRIL 15: Spent weekend in Baltimore with Belba.

APRIL 17: Took troop train through WDC, VA AND W VA TO Port Of Embarkation.

APRIL 23: Boarded U S S Butner Army troop ship

MAY 13: Landed at Cape Town, South Africa. Spent 24 hours liberty.

MAY 14: Back on board ship and proceeded around Cape Horn, S A, sea very rough.

MAY 16: Stop at East Africa to refuel.

MAY 25: Arrived at Bombay, India and boarded troop train.

MAY 28: Arrived Ramgarh, India Training Camp. We are issued rifles, ammo, food, etc.

MAY 29: Boarded C-47 transport plane and flown to Ledo Air Base in Assam, India.

MAY 30: Issued more ammo, and my Tommy gun. We take off at 0530 for Myitkyina, Burma. Arrived at 1300. Took cover in foxholes around the airstrip from falling Jap artillery fire. At 1700 we move out approximately 500 yards and form a perimeter for the night with barbed wire.

MAY 31: Move out approximately one mile from strip over foot trail which in three months was to become a part of Ledo Road. We formed a perimeter. Our first casualty occurs. Lt shoots one of our men through head with .45 Tommy gun. Everyone is trigger happy.

JUNE 1: I return to air strip for medical supplies. During night I hear Jap artillery coming over and wake up men in Bn Aid tent. The tent we were sleeping in receives a direct hit and is blown to shreds. One of the men sleeping with us received shrapnel wound in side and arm. A man in next tent has his stomach ripped open. He died an hour later, several others are injured.

JUNE 3: I returned to the Company, but they had moved up approximately one mile from railhead and had barely managed to get out of an ambush when I reached Bn HQ. We suffered about twenty casualties. We formed a perimeter and remained there for several days. We sent out combat patrols and recon groups. A Lt named Tex was shot in the stomach and killed and several others were wounded on one patrol. We returned the following day to get the body, but fell into another ambush. Several men were slightly wounded. My squad was using their mortars to try and dislocate the snipers in trees and in intricate and heavy fortifications dug by the Japs. This was one of the best defensive positions I have ever seen. We lost a large number of men there and K Co also had heavy casualties when they attacked these positions. The Japs fought to the last man.

JUNE 6: We moved up from the railhead about 6 miles to form road block on the road between Myitkyina and Mogaung.

JUNE 7: We moved up into the village on the later road. According to recon. there was a machine gun nest in schoolhouse in village square. Another fellow and I were given "bazookas" and assigned to knock it out. But all we met were a few snipers.

(Continued on page 7)

PASS IN REVIEW

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

PHILIP J CHRISTNER, 5307/2/BCT/I&R PLAT, 499 Darwin Dr, Buffalo NY 14225-1013, Widow/DOROTHY, January 18, 2003 @ Son/ Michael mchristner@adelphia.net.

WILLIAM P HENDERSON, 5307/2/GCT/B, 520 Palm Dr, MARYSVILLE OH 43040-5517, (716) 754-7725, December 4, 2002 @ Son/& Buddy/EdKohler

COL. JAMES HOLLAND, 475/3/HQ, 2529 Hastings Dr, Belmont CA 94002-3321, (650) 592-7496, February 23. 2002 @ Lee Chalifour

MERRILL B HUTCHINSON, 613/C, 5400 State Route 31 W Lot 19, Newark NY 14513-9759, (315) 331-7393, 2003 @ Widow Elsie

TED JANKOWSKI, 5307/236/HQ/COMM, CHIN LIAISON/COMM, 4236 S Richmond St, Chicago IL 60632-2523, (773) 927-7163, October 9, 2002 @ Son Ted Jr, Tjankonek1@cs.com, WIDOW/ Harriet

CHARLES W MAPLE, 5307/3/OCT/I & R PLAT, 8622 Starcrest Dr. Apt G1, San Antonio TX 78217-4702, 946-9058, April 13, 2003 @ Dtr Linda/Widow DELLA

STANLEY R PLATO, 5307; 475/3/I CO, 2020 Pine St, Three Rivers MA 01080-1148, February 19, 2003 @ Widow/Irene

DONALD M PRICE, 5307/2/G, 609 Clinchfield St, Kingsport TN 37660, March 23, 2000 @ Widow/Nettie

JOHN P REAMES, 5307/HQ/RE, 3469 S Welwood Ave, Springfield MO 65804-6488, Year 2000 @ Widow/Marjorie

JOHN K REED, 5307/1; 475/3/L/3 PL, 4400 Laurel Rd, Alexandria VA 22309-2523, March 23, 2002 @ Joann Beale, Granddaughter, <beale4@aol.com>

WILLIAM S SEBREE, 475/2 BN, @ friend Bill Masterson.

EARL VAN METER, 5307/1/RCT/A CO;475/1/A, PO Box 226, CabinsWV, 26855-0226, 257-4623, March 2, 2000 @ Widow/ARVELLA

FALL IN

MAX BIGHAM, 5307 HQ DET; 600 N PANTANO RD #608, TUCSON AZ 85710-2370, 520-731-0534

CARRYING THE TORCH

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

MICHAEL HAGERMAN, 1350 Fairbanks Ct, Dixon CA 95620-2615, (707) 678-3427, HONORARY

MRS CAROL MAGNOTTA, WIDOW/JOSEPH, 9580 SWEETWATER RD, Tell City IN 47586, (812) 547-2602, HONORARY

BETSY NAKADA, Widow/Boy, 1538 Kanelake St, Pearl City HI 96782, HONORARY

LETTERS TO EDITOR

EDITOR

A friend gave me the name of a member of Hq Co, 124th Cavalry who lives across the Hudson River from me, Joseph Napoletano. He would like to be a member of the MMA.

Joe recalled an unfortunate tragedy at Camp Landis involving "friendly fire" that killed two Chinese soldiers and blew Joe out of his tent, shaken but unharmed. A Cavalry 81 MM mortar squad had misread the number of powder charges to drop in the tube and the rounds fell right smack in the middle of the 124th area where the Chinese were waiting to start a training exercise with the Marsmen. The Chinese raised "hell" and a team from New Delhi flew in to investigate. A change or two was made on the mortar squad and that was all. Melvin Blair, 5307/209Engrs; 124/HQ. PO Box 536, Cornwall-on Hudson NY 12520-0536

EDITOR

My Dad, Norman Stessin, was a Private First Class, in the 475th Infantry, also participated in the Battle Of Myitkyina as a member of the 5307th. He told me he was a scout. His papers also say he was a Rifleman 745. I would like to know more about what happened to him. He never liked to talk about it. Sincerely, Susan Stessin, 3 Mares Trail, New Paltz NY 12561-3109.

EDITOR

I would like to add to the historical record that I was the first one up the trail to the 2nd Bn at Nhpum Ga. For sure, I was the first one to meet up with George Rose at his machine gun position on the hill. (ED; Rose agrees.) Winslow B Stevens, 1145 S Oak Ave, Bartow FL 33830-6554, (813) 533-6479, 5307/3/KCT/S-3

EDITOR

By pure chance my husband and I met a man named Gerald Carroll in the coffee shop. For some reason in the conversation, the name of the Merrill's Marauders was brought up.

I told Jerry that my Dad was a Marauder, and that I would bring him Dad's Honorable Discharge papers to show him. It turned out that he was in the same unit. My Dad was there in the Battle of Myitkyina. He was not sent home afterward and had to remain there joining Gerald's outfit.

My Dad would not talk about the war, so Jerry's keeping me in on all the war stories, plus he lent me all of his copies of the BURMAN NEWS. He saves all of them. (Ed. BRAVO).

I lost my Father last year, February 3, 2002. Can you

put me on the list to get the BURMAN NEWS? (ED: DID THAT).

My Mom told me a little bit of Dad's experiences over there. She said his ship went down and he was in a life raft, floating on the ocean for three days before they were found. Do you know which ship this was?

When my Dad came back home, they tried to give him his medals but he was so angry because they promised to send him home after the Battle of Myitkyina that he threw them on the ground. Dad told them to go to Hell, because he went through Hell

May we still receive his medals to put with his funeral flag?

He was a good man and a wonderful DAD. I would like to be in touch with men who knew him there. My name is: CATHERINE BOOG, 9520 S BARRY RD, BANNISTER MI 48807-9773, 989-847-4833.

EDITOR

I wish to join the Merrill's Marauders Association. My Father was Maurice J Henderson. He served in the 5307th Hq Detachment. I also believe that I had the privilege of being the first known son to be in the Marauders. I was assigned to "HQ Battery, 612th FA Bn, 75th Regimental Combat Team, Merrill's Marauders." I was in that organization from December 1954 to January 1956 when it was deactivated. JAMES HENDERSON, 85 Heritage Drive, Whitinsville MA 01588-2366.

EDITOR

I am attempting to contact any Merrill's Marauder's survivors who may have known and served with my uncle, Joe Montoya. My uncle passed away about 10 years ago, but after viewing the History Channel dangerous missions program, I was moved to see if I could still contact any of his "buddies". I don't know which unit Joe served with, but I recall him saying that he was one of only two sharpshooters in his company, and he was also a bodyguard for a Col. Beach. My uncle also related his experiences in the battle of Walabum, being part of a 3 man BAR team. After being wounded, his hospital ship was sunk by a Jap sub in the Indian Ocean and he spent a few days on the water. I have other stories of his actions but I don't recall the actual names. I would appreciate any information you can give me to find out what specific unit he was with, and any survivors from that unit whom I may be able to contact. Harold H. Suazo, 1709 W. 101st Ave, Thornton, CO. 80260, 303-576-6333, 303-356-4262 cell. Email: haroldsuazo@earthlink.net

EDITOR

According to My Dad, he was in 158th Infantry 45th Division "Bushmasters". The 158th left 45th Division following Pearl Harbor and went to Panama. He contracted Malaria "Yellow Fever" while in Panama and the 158th went on to New Guinea without him. He then joined the 5th Infantry in Panama and found his way to Fort Carson, Colorado where volunteers were being requested for combat and that is when he joined the 5307th and became a Marauder. I am still getting more info from him. He was sniper shot in the back while digging a foxhole. He was very lucky and I am very proud of him. Any additional information you can give me will be most helpful. I would also appreciate contact with Marauders who knew my Father. Laura Bigham Carrell, 16761 Viewpoint Lane Apt 122, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, dcarrell@earthlink.net

OFFICERS ROW

PRESIDENT – PHIL PIAZZA

It has been a very hectic time since the Reunion, with innumerable trips to Ft. Benning to check on arrangements for the Reunion, and attending ceremonies and balls for the Regiment, 1st BN and 3rd BN. I was also honored to be asked to be the keynote speaker at the Ranger Training Brigade Ball. It is always nice to see my old friends in the Ranger fraternity, as well as socializing with them and the new younger Rangers.

The 8-week symposium that I co-chaired at Anderson College on WW2 with a history professor was a big success, especially the segment on Merrill's Marauders, and we have been asked to repeat it.

I am still swamped with requests to speak on the Marauders every week, and it is amazing the continued interest from students as well as civic groups. Can you imagine an old Connecticut Yankee like me being asked to speak to a group of the Sons of the Confederacy, and the following week, the Daughters of the Confederacy? I have been living down here for 21 years and have been repeatedly told that I was on a temporary visa. Maybe I will make it now. I wish that my old friend Jack Benfield was around to see it

I wish that all of you could have been with Emma

and me at the 1st BN in Savannah for the ceremony when they awarded the medals and citations to those young Rangers. They did an extraordinary job and it was well deserved for all their actions in Afghanistan. We are all proud of them for carrying on our heritage. God willing, they will all survive the present conflict and all come home safe and sound. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Plans for the Reunion are coming along fine, and I am sure that you will all have a good time visiting Ft. Benning, the Ranger Memorial, and seeing the Rangers in Action demonstration, as well as the many sites in Columbus. If anyone wants any more personal information, do not hesitate to contact me, but please, for the sake of my pocketbook, do not expect me to return calls, as there are too many of them. God Bless, and hopefully I will see you at the Reunion.

My phone number is 864-972-3239, my Fax number is the same number, and my e-mail is marauder1@trivergent.net.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY – Ray Lyons

The Curator at the Fort Polk Military Museum has asked if any of us has a 475th METAL insignia. Similar to the cloth patch but made of metal. Personally I have never seen nor heard of a metal insignia. Similar to the cloth patch but made of metal. Personally I have never seen nor heard of a metal insignia for the 475th which was made overseas. If anyone knows of such an item, please advise me.

I have been to China finally after almost making it in 1945. This time I went as the representative of the MMA at the rededication of the Stilwell Museum in Chongqing. I accompanied Col Easterbrook, his wife Hahn and two daughters, Susan and Nancy. If it was not for their good services, I might still be over there working my way through official channels.

Besides checking out the new – old furniture in General Stilwell's old quarters, we were part of a series of welcoming speeches, talks, lectures, question and answer sessions. All of which contributed to a better understanding of the good relationship between the Merrill's Marauders and the Chinese New First Army.

I also met with members of the family of Mr. Tao who shared the Indianapolis Reunion with us. Some of them even came down from Kunming to meet with the representative of the MMA. They took me on a tour of the ancient hilltop buildings once occupied by Chiang-Kai-shek and on one occasion by General Marshall. Mr Tao Zai-lian's Brother is a Medical Doctor. His son was my tour guide and he indeed was proud of his ability to use the English language and to learn more from chatting with me.

It was amazing to realize how many Chinese children start in the fourth grade to learn English and some continue on through College. On one afternoon session at the Chongqing Technology and Business University, which has an English language Library sponsored by the Stilwell group, Col Easterbrook spoke at length to the students. I also had the chance to talk and share questions and answers from the group of English speaking students. Both were favorably received as well as comments from the two Easterbrook daughters.

I also took advantage of the opportunity to speak of the Marauders wartime service at a function called "City Leaders of Chongqing meet with foreign VIP guests at the Foreign Affairs Office of Chongqing". Later I spoke at a "Commemoration Symposium" at the same building but a different room. Both events were translated, the first one a simultaneous translation and the second by a translator who did the conversion in sections as we paused. Both affairs were addressed by notables, Chinese and American. I believe it fair to say that your representative was favorably received. Darrell Jenks, a representative of the US Embassy in Beijing also traveled to the affair, spoke at the different sessions and provided a very useful service by explaining to me what the different food items were at the dinner.

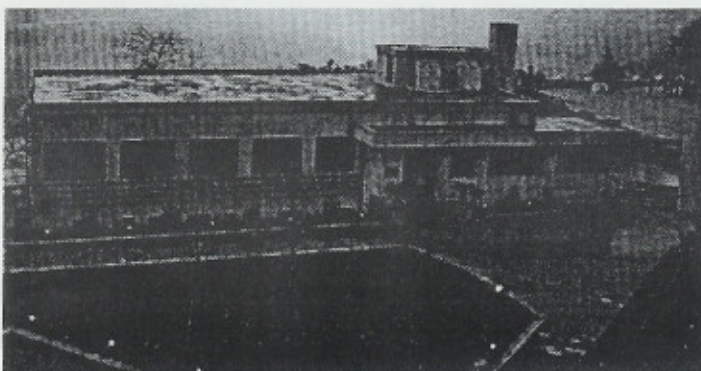
There will be future additions made to the Stilwell Museum as time and money is made available.



Ray Lyons at First Affair Chongqing Foreign Office



Student Group, Stilwell Language School,
Center- Mr. Houghton Freeman
& Mrs. Dorene Freeman

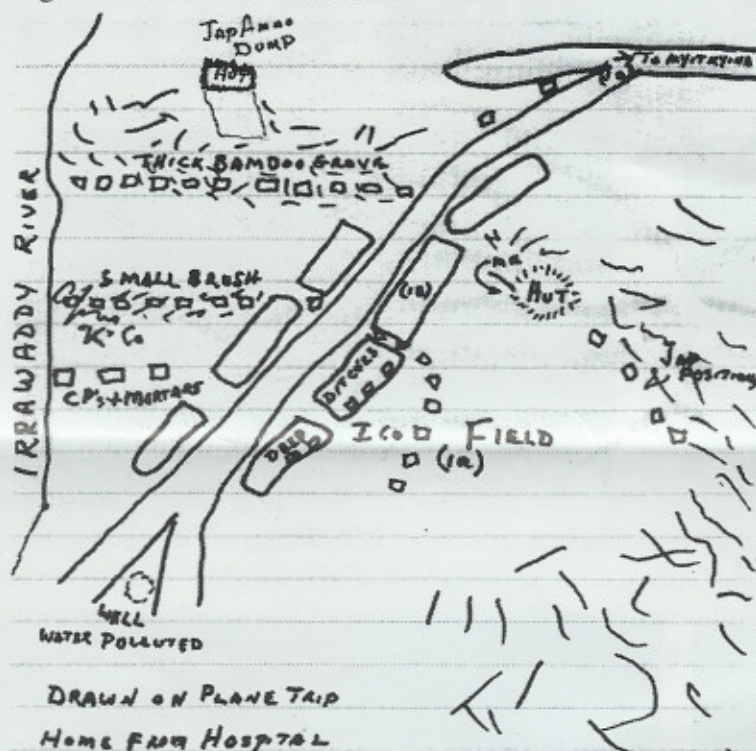


Stilwell Museum
Chongqing China
Photos by Mike Hamilton



New Bust of Gen. Stillwell
From Left to Right, Col. Easterbrook, back to camera,
Houghton Freeman, opposite, Retired Mayor of Chongqing,
Mr. Yu, next, Deputy Chief Mayor Madame Cheng, next,
Xie Xianhui, Director, Stilwell Research Center

JUNE 8: We moved up approximately 300 yards from village. I & K Companies on line. I will draw diagrams as to terrain features.



DRAWN ON PLANE TRIP
HOME FROM HOSPITAL

We moved up in drizzling rain along road, and deployed at point (1A). All the mortars fired at Jap Machine gun nests near hut on right of road. When our ammo was exhausted, we joined the line. My squad moved up to point (1B) There were eight wounded in there and one dead (Prontniky) when we arrived. We were pinned down for two hours. BN HQ fired mortars and artillery on Jap positions and we managed to evacuate wounded. The Lt tells my squad to advance to fork in the road (1C). We advance on road but snipers get two men in the arm. We manage to recross road and take cover in the ditches where I bandaged men and covered their retreat. The whole company retreated to ditches (1B & C) to reorganize. We had lost twenty men, two killed, the rest wounded up to this point. More ammo and food were brought up from BN HQ, as our supply was almost exhausted. At 1500 we got a report from the I & R Platoon that the Japs number only about twenty and we can push up to cross road. We started to move out online, the Japs let the men cross halfway across the field and the resistance became so terrific that the entire company was pinned down for about one hour before they managed to retreat to ditches. There were many wounded near my mortar position. As they all retreated from ditch (1B) and waited to be taken to BN Aid station, the Japs dropped knee mortar fire into ditches and killed several of the wounded and wounded many oth-

ers. We prepared for a counter attack, but none came. It kept raining all day and the ditches were rapidly filling with water. I dug a small foxhole which was soon half full of water and slept from dark till dawn as I was so exhausted. Barbour slept with me. If the Japs had attacked that night, we would have all been wiped out. Our mortars would not fire. No heavy machine guns could fire. Half the rifles, etc. were jammed and all the men were completely exhausted after 18 hours of continuous fighting in drizzling monsoon rain and mud up to their waists.

JUNE 9: The Company was deployed on both sides of the road in contact with the Engineer Battalion and K Company. We dug in and waited for further orders. I was in a 6' x 6' x 3' mortar position about 200' from the front line. We tried three attacks from these positions. But we could not advance past the thick bamboo as the Japs had very good positions there. We tried 81s, 60s and 4.2 mortars, bazookas, dive bombing and strafing by P-51s but all to no avail. We stayed there for 28 days. I don't see why I didn't loose my mind completely in those 28 days! It rained twice each day and when it didn't rain the temperature soared to what appeared to be 110 degrees. The Japs would continually try to draw our fire at night. They would keep us continually on edge. I took two baths in the Irrawaddy in that time and was quite surprised at the coldness of the water. There were always dead Japs floating down the river and the smell was far from pleasant. The food was usually K or C rations but I ate very little besides the pills I took for my dysentery which kept getting worse and sapped all my remaining strength. Several of the men shot themselves "accidentally" in the arms or legs. Everyone's nerves were getting pretty bad. It became a series of squabbles and arguments. But you could not blame anyone. We started having a few cases of malaria, "jungle rot", and other diseases. There's quite a bit more I could write on these 28 days but my memory has gotten a little dim. We were so happy to be relieved by F Company that we almost kissed them. Poor guys, little did they know what they were in for! It was there that Propst was killed along with Zimmer and a lot more of my buddies whose names I can't remember now. It was there I last heard of my friend Kauffman. He was on outpost with another fellow. In the morning they found his helmet and several days later found his buddy's body with 16 bayonet holes in it. It's also there Caron was killed. So you can see that it was pretty hot spot for a while.

JULY 27 1944. WIA

Raymond La Pierre, 5307/3/I Co, 167 Eileen St,
Yarmouth Port MA, 02675-2010, 508-362-5897.

WHICH REUNION SITE IN 2004?

All members of Merrill's Marauders Association are eligible to offer a city and hotel as the reunion site for the year 2004. To do so, ask any Association officer for a detailed specification sheet, get this filled in by the hotel sales manager of your hotel and mail or fax a copy to that officer by July 8th to give the Board time to see that it meets Association standards. Those that do will be put up for a vote of all members attending the Fort Benning Reunion this August.



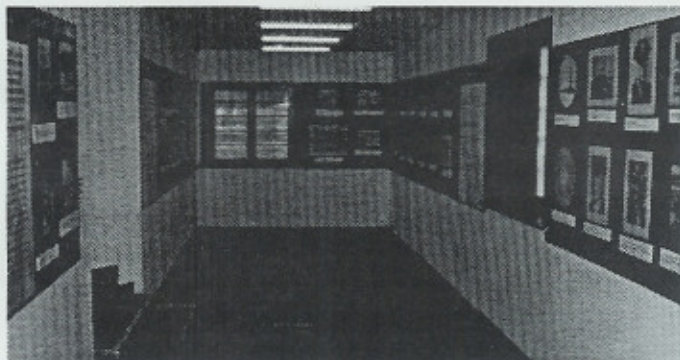
**L-R 1st SGT Dean K. Voltz &
S/SGT Anton Tagel 5307/3/OrangeCT/KCo**
Camping out. Cooking tog with "Billy" can.



"Billy" can



Military Room at the Stillwell Museum



Display Room at the Stillwell Museum