



# The Burman News

Official Publication of Merrill's Marauders Association, Inc. • November 2012 • No. 112



## Merrill's Marauders, Louisville, KY — September 1, 2012

Left to right starting at top: **Bob Passanisi** (Galahad) Red Combat Team; **Marvin Boyenga** (MARS Task Force) Co L 475th Inf; **Bill Binter** (Galahad) Green Combat Team; **Vincent Melillo** (Galahad) Blue Combat Team; **Pete Ewing** (New Galahad) Co L 5307th & Co L 475th; **Frank Ziede** (New Galahad); **James E. Stevens** (New Galahad) Co I 5307th & Co I 475th; **James Vaughn** (Galahad) White Combat Team; **Bob Ketcham** (Galahad) White Combat Team; **Charles Von Gunten** (New Galahad) Co I 5307th & Co I 475th; **Frank Breyer** (New Galahad) Co F 5307th & Btry B 612th FA; **Bernie Jezercak** (Galahad) Blue Combat Team; **Pat Brown** (Galahad) Khaki Combat Team; **Jerry Morehead** (Galahad) L-5 Aircraft pilot; **Roy Matsumoto** (Oldest Marauder present at 99); **Ernie Hubacker** (New Galahad) Co K 475th Inf; **George Koppel** (New Galahad) Co I 5307th & Co I 475th; **Robert Alford** (New Galahad) Co K 5307th.

# 2012 Reunion Keynote Speaker Draws Inspiration from General Merrill

U.S. Air Force Col. Jeffrey W. Decker, 23d Maintenance Group commander, delivered the keynote address to Marauders and families at our 66th Merrill's Marauder's reunion in Louisville, KY.

The Colonel spoke about his own life, expressing his thanks and admiration for what the Marauders did almost 70 years ago.

Col. Decker obviously recognizes the great sacrifice made by each Marauder, and his message tied it into what his unit does today.

Decker noted some similarities between the challenges the Marauders faced and the ones faced by today's service member. One interesting point Decker mentioned was that the unit he is assigned to now, the Flying Tigers, flew missions in the same areas the Marauders later fought in during World War II.

"There is a lot we have learned from you," the Colonel said. "These lessons are timeless. There are many challenges we face today, that are the same as what you faced ... Just like the Marauders, we are fighting a determined enemy."

Decker also reflected on the leadership of Merrill himself, stating, "While General Merrill was out in the field with his men, he marched along with his men and had two heart attacks before he was evacuated."

Decker also acknowledged the differences between today's deployments and operations the Marauders participated in. "The Marauders suffered from hunger, diseases and battles with a well-equipped enemy. By the end of the

campaign, every one of you had marched 750 miles through dense jungle in less than six months. You also fought five major engagements on 32 separate occasions. When the unit was disbanded Aug. 10, 1944, and the final muster was called, only 130 of the original 2,997 members were combat effective.

"After studying up on the campaigns fought by Merrill's Marauders, I am somewhat embarrassed by the campaign I just fought in over in Afghanistan," Decker said during his speech at the reunion. "Being posted at Kandahar Airfield, which received its fair share of indirect rocket fire and a few attempted base incursions, we still had TGIFs, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, a PX with computers for sale, Coca-Cola and Pringles potato chips, hot showers every day, and air conditioning. So my embarrassment was only compounded by the realization that 10 miles on a daily basis was the expected march pace and dealing with over 300 pack animals was an additional challenge. I drove a few miles daily in my air-conditioned Ford Explorer.



U. S. Air Force Col. Jeffrey W. Decker delivers the Keynote Address.

"The bottom line is, my respect for you who slugged it out in the Burmese jungles has grown even more and my appreciation for your fighting at Walawbum, Shaduzup, Ritpong, and Myitkyina, though overshadowed by places such as Normandy and Okinawa, were just as important in the overall war effort and a speedy conclusion to the hostilities." ☆

## Reunion Coordinator/Treasurer Jerrie Daly Expresses Appreciation

"The Marauders love having a military speaker because they understand and respect them," said Jerrie Daly, Treasurer and Reunion Coordinator for Merrill's Marauders Proud Descendants. "He showed a huge amount of respect to them and they appreciated it. He was kind, gentle and affirmative of everything the Marauders went through.

"It's always a challenge getting a speaker because we have no budget," said Daly. "We can't pay them, so the most we can do is offer them dinner. We invited Colonel Decker, and he said he would be more than happy to speak at our reunion." ☆

# A Word from the Merrill's Marauders Chairman

by Robert E. Passanisi

I have attended many reunions and have been instrumental in many. All were good and many were outstanding, but this 66th reunion at the Holiday Inn Hurstbourne, KY, hosted by our Proud Descendants, was arguably the best I have attended. The kids (if we can still call them kids) went all out to see that everyone had a good time. Their devotion and hard work was to insure that, you their heroes and those that are no longer with us, would be proud of their efforts.

Ernest Hubacker, at 97, made the trip alone as usual, this time, instead of coming by bus he choose to fly. He has a powerful will, like most Marauders who will do the difficult now; the impossible will takes them a little bit longer.



This coming reunion will be held at the:

Crowne Plaza Hotel & Suites  
Minneapolis/  
St. Paul International  
Airport Hotel  
3 Appletree Square (I-494 &  
34th Avenue South)  
Bloomington, MN 55425  
August 29 - September 1, 2013

Some of you old-timers who think it would be too difficult to attend, please take note that Roy Matsumoto, at 99 years of age, came all the way from Friday Harbor, Washington. If he can do it, so can you; all it takes is some of that Marauder determination. ★

## ★ THE APPROACH TO MYITKYINA ★

By the time they got to Myitkyina, the Marauder ranks had been thinned by about half due to casualties and disease. Men in a weakened condition would have to march 112 miles over a narrow mountain trail across the rugged, 8,000-foot Kumon Range to Myitkyina, and then battle the Japanese. It would require a supreme effort. Returning to duty in time for the offensive, Merrill tried to boost his men's spirits, telling them that once they had seized the airstrip at Myitkyina no more would be asked of them until they had been sent back to India for a rest.

Although the unit had displayed uncommon valor and fortitude in the jungle, Merrill's Marauders still had neither colors nor insignia. None of them had been

promoted or decorated. When Colonel Hunter complained to Stilwell's staff, he was told curtly that the Marauders should spend more time fighting and less time worrying about promotions or medals. Although he was generally perceived as a soldier's soldier, Stilwell was considered cold and uncommunicative by the Marauder officers. His name "was a red flag to a bull."

After a brief rest while reorganizing, and integrating with the Chinese troops, Merrill's Marauders started out on April 28, 1944, for their biggest task yet. The monsoon was not expected to begin until the middle of May, but the rain started coming down on May 1. General Merrill was back with his men as they slogged through ankle-deep mud toward

the Kumon Range. With his rifle at the ready and puffing on his briar pipe, he tried to encourage the dispirited soldiers onward and upward over the narrow trails.

The Marauders began to climb the range, which the Kachins had warned would be impossible to traverse during the rains. As they struggled up toward the 6,000-foot pass through the spine of the ridge, the Marauders were often forced to crawl up the rain-slick slopes on their hands and knees. In one sector, they climbed from 1,000 feet to 6,000 feet almost straight up. It took the Americans two days to cover one mile.

Steps had to be hacked in the slippery slopes for the exhausted pack mules. Several of the faithful animals fell and broke their

*(continued on page 9)*

# OFFICE OF THE SURGEON — 475th Infantry

## APO 218 16 November 1944

### — MEDICAL HISTORY —

The 475th Infantry was formed of personnel of Old Galahad and three battalions of New Galahad. At the beginning the greater percentage of the organization were combat wise. New Galahad units had recently been actively engaged with the enemy at Myitkyina. By the middle of June most of the Old Galahad men have been evacuated. The few hundred that remained were examined for further combat duty; about twenty-five were no longer physically fit. In addition a considerable number were psychoneurotic and many had orthopedic defects of the feet. In the New Galahad group, the physical defects consisted mostly of residual disturbances caused by amoebic dysentery and various orthopedic disturbances.

Medical officers during this period and well on into October were kept busy examining replacements. Physically unfit men were hospitalized usually as administrative admissions; many were returned to duty from the hospitals, this was due to a lack of a clearly defined policy as to the height of physical fitness required; medical officers in the field were faced with a problem of obtaining men, who could march long distances over rugged terrain in the jungle. Hospitals returned men to full field duty who met minimum standards of physical fitness.

The present organization consists of three battalions of infantry, Regimental Headquarters section, and Quartermaster Pack

Troops attached to each battalion. There are seven Medical Officers, three Dental Officers, and two Veterinary Officers; there are ninety-nine medical department and veterinary personnel among the enlisted man. Material throughout the organization is carried by pack mule. Because of the length of the column about fifteen disposal kits containing plasma, morphine, sulfadiazine, sulfaguanadine, and dressings are distributed to each battalion. They reduce the need of transporting medical equipment from the detachment proper. Medical department personnel are well trained in the handling and packing of mules. They are all trained in the administration of plasma. All are trained in the use of small arms.

Malaria has been the big problem; toward the end of May, many of the Old Galahad men developed malaria; many of the present hospital admissions are recurrences of initial attacks. The New Galahad men also had many cases of malaria. These combat troops were not taking atabrine on arrival in Myitkyina and due to confusing circumstances at the time, did not take it for two to three days after arrival; also during combat there was poor distribution of atabrine, many of the men did not take atabrine regularly. Camp Landis is situated on the banks of the swift flowing Irrawaddy; during the month of October, mosquitoes were not as prevalent. This may have been partly due to airplane

spraying of the area twice a week.

Malaria was prevalent in a group of five hundred New Galahad men who were training at Ramgarh and, later joined the outfit at Camp Landis. Undoubtedly some of these attacks of malaria were recurrences. A significant number of pack troops coming down the Ledo road arrived here either with malaria, or developed it within a week or two of arrival.

Scrub typhus has been a second large problem. While in the static situation at Myitkyina during combat, mite typhus did occur occasionally; however, the peak came several weeks after clearing the jungle for camp Landis. Yet, even after the area was cleared some individuals developed mite typhus, who never had gone into the jungle itself. The spraying of the area by plane and the spraying of the grounds and the tents was probably a relatively effective measure. However, many cases of typhus continue to occur; this may be explained by the necessity of training men in the jungle.

Skin diphtheria occurred in over 100 men from August 15 to the first week of October. This is difficult to explain. Part may be due to the great prevalence of severe ringworm infections of the feet in the command at the end of the battle of Myitkyina. Practically all of the cases of diphtheria occurred in those men who were in the final stage of the battle of Myitkyina; a spot check of two hundred and fifty of these men by Schick test showed 27% positive.

Sanitation has been very satisfactory. Everyone agrees that this is the best camp we have been in. Very few cases of dysentery have occurred. Commanders have been most cooperative.

Food has been very satisfactory. Most of the rations have been B rations with fresh meat supplied occasionally. In this regard, it would be most helpful to medical officers to have information regarding the vitamin contents of canned and dehydrated foods; vitamin tablets are supplied and the taking of them is voluntary. Vitamin deficiencies have not occurred. It is pertinent for medical officers to know the caloric content of K and C rations, and the vitamin content; this information is not available. In the last campaign, we all knew the caloric value of the diet was insufficient for marching troops; we estimated a ration to contain 3,000 calories and felt we needed 5,000 calories. Preclinical vitamin B deficiencies in retrospect probably occurred during the march to Myitkyina because practically all personnel complained of vague

aching disturbances in the legs (which were not explainable on the basis of marching). We were well used to marching by then; half the command complained of "black-outs," some complained of sensations of numbness in the lower extremities. At the time these disturbances appear to be psychological, but on reconsideration, they were probably due to the diet.

The unit at present evacuates the sick and injured to the 44th Field Hospital; this unit has given very satisfactory support. The eye, nose, and throat clinic at the 48th Evacuation Hospital in Myitkyina have been most efficient in examining and supplying glasses for those in need of them. Several men were sent to Shingbiyang to have dentures made.

In regards to medical personnel doctors have been decreased from an original allotment of four per battalion to two medical officers plus a dentist. It is believed that this number is insufficient. It is true that the 44th portable Surgical Hospital

will support us; this will probably work out satisfactorily if all units have easy access to their station. An increase of surgical enlisted personnel is also recommended; on jungle trails, the column is so long that one aid men per platoon is needed; Quartermaster pack troops have been attached to each battalion; this increases the strength of the battalion by one hundred; these troops should have aid men trained with them so that when they are attached to units, the unit does not have to provide for them.

In conclusion as at present constituted, the unit is formed of men of high caliber, physical and mental; their morale is excellent. From a medical officer's point of view, the unit success depends on the prevention or holding to a minimum such diseases as malaria, dysentery, typhus, and fungus infections. Prevention of typhus is the one problem of which we are skeptical. ☆

— November 15, 1944



*Merrill's Marauders  
Proud Descendants,  
Louisville, KY —  
September 1, 2012*

*The descendants pictured  
above attended the  
Saturday evening  
banquet dinner.*

*Thanks to everyone  
who attended the 66th  
convention, making it  
the best yet!*





## Report from Proud Descendants

We, the Board Members of the Merrill's Marauders Proud Descendants were honored to have hosted the 66th Annual Merrill's Marauders Reunion, held in Louisville Kentucky this Labor Day weekend.

From all accounts it was well received and enjoyed by both the Marauders and the Descendants in attendance. We certainly pray that all had a safe return home.

It was a joy to see the attending Marauders gathered together on Friday afternoon and openly detail their enlistment and service stories with the attending Descendants, who were completely enthralled by their tales, and completely sympathetic with their many paths of sorrow they endured. This gathering was accompanied by Mark Donnelly from New York who afterwards gathered individual interviews with the Marauders and will be producing a new documentary of our heroes.

Guest speaker Col. Jeffrey Decker of Moody AFB, recently returned from Afghanistan, wowed the audience at Saturday night's banquet. Also featured was an award-winning Color Guard from VFW Post 1170, of Middletown, KY. This Color Guard was equaled by the Friday night banquet Color Guard, led by our own Descendant Leon Adams and consisting of Descendants Jim and Mark Stevens and Marauder Pete Ewing.

Additionally, Timothy Barnard from the Fort Knox Awards & Decoration Branch was a guest of Bob Passanisi. Timothy Barnard along with Christina Green from Ft. Knox were researchers who rebuilt service records for 31 Marauders KIA in 1944 whose families (the ones who could be located) were finally given their awards during a special December 2011 ceremony in Savannah by the 1st Ranger BN. Also on Friday night, at age 99, Roy Matsumoto, as the oldest Marauder in attendance, received an American Flag that was certified as having flown at the nations' Capitol Building.

Humor was supplied by another poem written by Marauder Ernest Hubacker and the impromptu comedy routine of Marauder Frank Breyer, which apparently have become a new tradition.

If you were unable to attend this year, you missed a wonderful weekend which also included a fabulous tour of Churchill Downs, and we pray that you will make every effort to attend next year in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

With many thanks to Marauder George Koppel's family for its assistance, to the hard working Proud Descendant's Board Members and the Marauders. ✪

## Wear Your Memorabilia!

by Bob Menta  
President, MMPD

The week of Sept. 16th Donna and I took our daughter and 3-year-old granddaughter to Disney World. On the last day there I wore my black T-shirt with a large Ranger Tab and large Marauder's Crest emblazoned on the front. It is a shirt that was available for sale at reunions many years ago.

As I was checking out, the hotel clerk saw my shirt and asked me if I was a Ranger. I replied no, but that my father was. She said that her father was a Major in the Marine Corps. but had always talked about his admiration for Army Rangers and called them the best fighting men and least recognized of all the military. We then continued with a pleasant conversation.

Then with a few more hours to spare before our flight home, we took the ferry boat over to the Magic Kingdom for one last whirl for the granddaughter.

I exited the boat and was walking along the exit lane as people waiting to board were in line, facing us, along a short railing. Suddenly a man grabbed my arm and said, "I'm 75th Rangers Viet Nam, glad to meet you." I replied to him that I wasn't, but that my dad was an original Marauder. He then shook my hand and said, "Then your father was part of the greatest of all."

I strongly plead with all members of the Marauders and Proud Descendants to proudly wear your Marauder memorabilia as often as possible.

You'll be amazed at the wonderful responses you'll get. ✪

# PFC. RALPH PINA, WITH MERRILL'S MARAUDERS, WOUNDED RESCUING PAL

*How Ralph Pina, well-known Torrance and Lomita boy, was wounded a second time while a machine gunner with Merrill's Marauders in Burma, rescuing a buddy from a bomb crater being peppered with fire from Japanese machine guns, is told in a letter dated Aug. 1, 1944, written in a Red Cross hospital.*

*That the wound is a pretty bad one is seen in the remark that he'll be in the hospital for a few months, and "then no more fighting."*

*The letter was sent to his parents and at Ralph's request. They gave it to Miss Irene Mills of Torrance High school, who has been corresponding with Ralph and hundreds of other boys from the district. It tells of his unit being cited by President Roosevelt for a "vital Burma victory responsible for the capture of the highly prized Myatkyina airfield."*

*Pfc. Pina's letter reads:*

"I hope that this letter will ease your mind and make you worry less. I guess as before you are wondering how it happened. Well, everything happened so fast that many of the things are forgotten. We were making an attack and had gained about 500 yards. We found ourselves receiving heavy Jap machine gun fire from heavily fortified Jap pill boxes. Orders came to withdraw until the pill boxes were knocked out with mortar fire.

"We withdrew, but six men were trapped on a bomb crater with a badly wounded man (Pvt. Winters). This crater was between our lines and the Jap pill boxes. Pvt. Winters was a good friend of mine and only the day before we had talked of what we were going to do

after we got back. He also was from California. There was so much noise from the firing that we could not hear them. Our aid men had passed out from heat exhaustion. I told Capt. Andres, our CO, that Winters was a friend of mine and that I was going to see what I could do.

"I took my tommy gun and ran, dodged and crawled until I got to the crater. I found out that three men were needed to carry him out because the rest had to put up a fire fight on the pill boxes so that we would not get hit when we carried him out. We found Sgt. Weiman, then Sgt. Grady and myself carried Winters out while the rest opened fire on the Japs. We were able to carry him out to our first line, where

we put him on a stretcher. The boys on the line then opened up on the Japs while; the boys got out of the crater. Sgts. Welnan and Grady and myself then started to take him to our trench, which was still farther down. We got about ten yards from the trench when a Jap machine gun sprayed us. Welman got hit through the stomach, Grady on the leg and myself through the right thigh. I was pretty lucky. It went through one side and out the other, and missed my bone.

"We jumped in the trench and some other boys pulled Winters in. There we got some more boys to carry Winters and Welman out. I was given a shot of morphine and a bandage to put on my leg. Later, with the help of two of the boys I walked back half a mile to an aid station.

"Later when I got to the operating table on one of the hospitals I found out that \_\_\_\_\_ (two words censored). I'm sure that Winters would have done just as much as he could had I been in his place. He was one of the best buddies a fellow could have. Welman, Grady and myself are now in the hospital doing fine. I guess this will put me out of any more fighting. I am ever so thankful to my Lord that again He spared my life.

"Guess this will be all this time. Please don't worry, because I'll feel better if I know that you are not worrying yourself sick. I'll be all right in a few months and then no more fighting." ✪



## *The Approach to Myitkyina*

*(continued from page 3)*

necks, and valuable equipment disappeared over precipices. In one day, the 3rd Battalion lost 20 of its mules and 4,000 pounds of vital equipment. Only half of the pack animals would make it to Myitkyina.

The Marauders clambered and stumbled on across the jungle range, and the journey was a nightmare. Merrill's officers found it increasingly difficult to enforce much discipline. Men would straggle into bivouac long after the head of the column arrived. Many suffered from amoebic dysentery from drinking stream water that the Chinese were using as latrines.

On the way to Myitkyina, the Marauders fought two battles with the enemy. They surrounded and decimated a small Japanese garrison at the village of Ripong. When the Americans moved into the settlement, they found that the Japanese troops had been living in squalor. Soon afterward, a number of the Marauders started suffering from a mysterious high fever. The FUO (fever of unknown origin) turned out to be a deadly mite-borne typhus that the Japanese had carried into Burma. A total of 149 Marauders came down with the disease, which was marked by high fever and skin lesions and lasted about two weeks, but many of the men in the End Run force died, including Colonel Henry I. Kinnison, a combat team leader.

By May 13, 1944, two weeks after they started out, on the End Run, they were close to their objective, Myitkyina. Merrill sent a radio message to Stilwell: "Can stop this show up till noon tomorrow, when the die will be cast, if you think it too much of a gamble. Personal

opinion is that we have a fair chance and that we should try." Stilwell replied, "Roll on in and swing on 'em."

Colonel Hunter, commanding the assaulting force, bivouacked near the Myitkyina airstrip on May 16 after putting local natives under guard to ensure that they would not alert the enemy. Kachin guerrillas went forward stealthily to scout the area and found the airfield only lightly defended. At 10 AM on May 17, Hunter launched the attack. The Marauders and two Chinese regiments slipped through the Japanese lines, emerged north, south, and west of Myitkyina, and seized the airfield.

Planned by Stilwell and Merrill, it was "a brilliantly conceived and intrepidly executed attack." The Marauder-Chinese force also assaulted a nearby ferry landing on the Irrawaddy River. The enemy were taken off guard and offered only ineffective resistance. At 3:30 ma that day, Hunter sent Stilwell the coded message, "Merchant of Venice," meaning that the airstrip had been taken and transport planes could land.

The capture of the airstrip was a bold tactic, and Stilwell was delighted. The British were astonished that he could have reached Myitkyina without their aid, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent a message to Lord Mountbatten asking "why the Americans, by a brilliant feat of arms, have landed us in Myitkyina." It was the first Japanese stronghold on the Asian mainland to be seized by the Allies.

Mountbatten, who had been preoccupied with British offensives elsewhere in Burma and in India, Sumatra, and Singapore, told Stilwell, "By the boldness of your

leadership, backed by the courage and endurance of your American and Chinese troops, you have taken the enemy completely by surprise and achieved a most outstanding success by seizing the Myitkyina airfield." He also praised the crossing of the Kumon Range as an incredible feat.

But then things began to go wrong. Colonel Hunter could have easily taken the town of Myitkyina with its garrison of 700 Japanese, but he had no orders to do so. So he stood firm and waited for the C-47 transport planes to bring in ammunition and rations. But the planes that arrived brought anti-aircraft units and aviation engineers. They were there to repair an airstrip that did not need repairing. Hunter fumed about the absence of ammunition he had been promised. General Merrill, meanwhile, had returned earlier to Stilwell's field headquarters. He had said that he would be the first to land once the field was captured, and would then direct the attack on Myitkyina. But he fell ill again and did not arrive for 24 hours.

Hunter launched two Chinese battalions against the enemy garrison, but twice the Chinese units shot at each other in the confusion and had to be withdrawn. The Marauders, meanwhile, battled with the Japanese street by street and house by house as the monsoon rains continued to pelt down. The enemy had reinforced the garrison before the End Run force had closed in. Units of two divisions and auxiliaries, a total of 3,500 men, now stubbornly defended the town. They were led by Lt. Gen. Renya Mataguchi, the victor of Singapore. The enemy had plenty of weapons and ammunition

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## *The Approach to Myitkyina*

(continued from page 9)

and were dug in behind strong earthworks. With little artillery, scant air support because of the weather, and no armor, the weary Marauders could not do much.

They were now in very poor shape, individually and as a combat force. Up to a hundred men a day were being airlifted out with sickness, and up to 30 a day were showing symptoms of typhus. Eighty percent of the Americans had dysentery, and many cut their trouser seats open so that they could relieve themselves instantly. Men of the 2nd Battalion were so tired that they fell asleep during the battle, and the unit was eventually reduced to a dozen effective riflemen. The pressure was on to keep as many men as possible in the line, so medical officers refused to send men back to hospitals in Assam until they had run temperatures of 103 degrees for three days and had been checked by a board of doctors.

The Marauders felt betrayed that they had not been relieved, and their morale sank lower. On May 25, Hunter sent Stilwell a note saying that his troops had been overextended and neglected and that they were now almost useless as a combat unit. He recommended that the 5307th Composite Unit be disbanded. By the end of May 1944, the original 3,000 Marauders had been reduced to about 200 still in action. Only about 1,300 had been able to participate in the Myitkyina operation, for which they were neither prepared nor equipped.

The Japanese at Myitkyina had orders to stand firm, and they fought on tenaciously. The Allied manpower situation became critical, so Stilwell scraped the bottom of the barrel to bolster

the crumbling Marauders. He threw in more Chinese troops, two battalions of U.S. combat engineers from the Ledo Road construction project, and two battalions of replacements—artillerymen, military policemen, and truck drivers. They fought as infantry, although many of them had not fired a weapon since basic training.

General Stilwell also ordered that convalescents be returned to the line as the Allied force struggled to hold on at Myitkyina. The order was transmitted as calling for men fit to walk. Sick and wounded Marauders at Assam hospitals were shipped back to Myitkyina despite the objections of medical officers.

Men in one group were so sick when they arrived at Myitkyina that they were immediately re-evacuated.

Merrill, who was hospitalized himself at the time, joined the doctors in their protests. "A lot of my men got very indignant," he said. "I was goddamn indignant myself, but I am positive that if we had asked for volunteers, every one of them would have gone back."

Finally by the end of July the enemy was surrounded, and, as August began, they either pulled out or were captured. Escaping Japanese troops were ambushed by guerrilla groups of OSS Detachment 101. ★

## **A Poem by Ernest Hubacker**

*96-year old Merrill's Marauder, Ernie Hubacker,  
flew on his own from North Dakota to  
Kentucky for this year's reunion.  
He wrote this poem while at the reunion.*

Of literature, this iota from far off North Dakota  
This old galoot gives a little toot  
Happy to be able the sun to see  
People must give a hoot about this old coot  
Much fuss is made over this old cuss  
As all people pamper this old scamper  
He has the nerve to accept more than he does deserve  
I lived a clean life  
Did not beat either wife  
Reason for that you see, they were both bigger than me  
Now to go hence to talk reverence  
As up the hill of life I climb  
I look across the valley of time  
Peering through the mist of years  
Recalling times of laughter, times of tears  
Then searching in my mind, wanting and hoping to find  
For my good life, a good word I could say  
To thank the Lord.

## Presidential Memorial Certificates

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans.

**History** — This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by all subsequent Presidents. Statutory authority for the program is Section 112, Title 38, of the United States Code.

**Administration** — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates which bear the current President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the Veteran's service in the United States Armed Forces.

**Eligibility** — Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased Veterans. More than one certificate may be provided.

**Application** — Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. Requests cannot be sent via email. Please be sure to enclose a copy of the Veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility, as we cannot process any request without proof of honorable military service. Please submit copies only, as we will not return original documents.

### VA Form 40-0247 Application for Presidential Memorial Certificate

**Instructions for Ordering a PMC Using Our Toll Free Fax Line:** If you have any questions about a certificate you have received, a request you have already sent in, or about the program in general, please use the "Contact Us" link at the top of the page.

**Check the Status:** If you have already requested a PMC more than sixteen (16) weeks ago and have not received it yet, please call 1-202-565-4964 to find out the status of your request. Please do not send a second application unless we request you to do so.

**Veteran Service Officers and Funeral Homes:** If you have questions about the status of a request please contact us at 1-202-565-4964. You may also send request for status by email to [pmc@va.gov](mailto:pmc@va.gov). Our application form (VA Form 40-0247) is shown above. Please save this form to your computer and make as many copies as you might need.

We do not administer to other VA programs and we do not have access to military documents or records. For assistance with other VA benefits or records please use the "Contact Us" link at the top of this page or you can call your closest VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000. ★

## Our Heroes Forever

S/SGT, GILBERT F COPPER, 5307/475/1/HQ, Fort Dodge, IA, From Terry Moehnke, on the internet, Final Roll Call, June 2, 2010.

PVT, CHESTER A. DAVID, 475/3/MEDIC, From Daughter Kathy, on the internet, Final Roll Call, October 17, 2012.

PFC, BALDWIN A. HANSEN, 5307/475/3/HQ, OCT, Santa Rosa, F. From widow Alma, Final Roll Call, October 12, 2010.

S/SGT, JOSEPH W. HENRY, 5307/1/b WCT, 13 LOGRIEN STREET, SANFORD, MA 04073, From son, Final Roll Call, September 15, 2012.

PFC, LEO E. LEMONS, 5307/475/2/HQ, 54 Raintree Dr. Cynthiana, KY, From son, Final Roll Call, September, 17, 2012.

T/4, GLEN G MADDEN, 5307/2/E, GCT, Fairfield, OH, From niece, Sandy Keller, Fairfield, OH, Final Roll Call, July 29, 2012.

PVT. WILLIAM T MCGINNIS, 5307/1/B WCT, Mt Morris, IL, From Howard McGinnis, Final Roll Call, October 10, 2012.

SGT, WALTER J. MIKOLAJEZYK, 5307/3/L KCT, Chicago Heights IL, Daughter Manica Ann Lapin, Final Roll Call, June 13, 2012.

PFC, LOUIS O. PERDOMO, 5307/3/MEDIC, From nephew Daniel Perdomo, Final Roll Call, August 3, 2012.

PFC, TEDDY T. SWIETT (SWIETLIKOWSKI), 5307/475/2/G, 142 School St. Everett MA 02149, From return mail, Final Roll Call, August, 2012.

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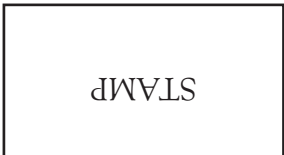
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