

Rudolph Barnett

Interview September 2002 in Spartanburg



Rudolph Barnett, a textile worker living in nearby Greer, SC was excited to learn of his assignment to Camp Croft for basic training. The 18 year old young man was inducted at Fort Jackson (SC) on 21OCT44 and was sent to Fort Bragg (NC) to be issued equipment prior to arriving at Croft that same month. His initial thoughts were that the camp was very neat and well cared for, and that the food was good and plentiful. Perhaps the best part was that he could catch a 30 minute bus ride home on a one day pass, a luxury few other soldiers shared. After having been assigned to the 37th ITB (Rifle), Barnett was 2 weeks short of completing the 13 week

training cycle when he experienced a tragic loss. His mother passed away suddenly and he was granted an emergency leave to rejoin his family.

Arriving back at Croft, he found that his training company had already graduated and been shipped out so he was reassigned (and partially "recycled") to a company in the 38th ITB. He believes the final two weeks to be the most important part of his training, which emphasized live fire simulations, especially the infiltration courses. Crawling under the barbed wire for 200 yards with machine gun fire overhead was more than some could stand; Barnett recalls one young trainee who was seriously injured when he stood up in the middle of the course.

Another recollection was of a man who went home on leave, got married, and shot himself in the foot after returning to Croft in an effort to keep from shipping overseas. Apparently the tactic did not work. Barnett also remembers the German POWs on post who were assigned to police the grounds and worked in the laundry and kitchens. They were always under guard but shared similar meals and facilities as the US personnel.

At some point prior to embarking for England in March 1945, Barnett left Croft and SC and eventually found himself assigned to the [106th Division](#) which was preparing to reinforce and replace units that had been engaged in the Battle of the Bulge. Moving through St. Lo and parts of Germany, the unit was assigned at times to guard German prisoners and performed other duties as part of the occupation force.

In August of 1946, after a 5 day trip home, Barnett was discharged as a Tech 5 at Fort Bragg on 7AUG46. He returned to his pre-war occupation in the Greer textile mill where he eventually met his wife to be. Settling in Wellford, SC, the couple retired from the Jackson Mill and still reside in the area. They remain good friends with another couple, the husband of which (Ernest Christmas) was part of the original cadre at Camp Croft.



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