

TSgt Ambrose T. Collier

422 INF

Stalag IV-B (4-B) Mulberg

Ambrose's brother, Lt. Joseph W Collier was a P-38 Lightning pilot and an Army Air Corps intelligence officer. He flew with the 370th Fighter Group, 401st squadron. On the morning of December 15, 1944 Lt. Collier and his driver S/Sgt Paul Adams left the Army Air Field at Florennes/Juzaine, Belgium and drove for two hours to Saint Vith. There, Lt. Collier found the 106th Division Command Post, located in a Catholic church. Uncle Joe had come to St. Vith to coordinate a visit with his brother. My father, Tech/Sgt. Ambrose (Brose) T. Collier, was a cook in the 106th Infantry Division, 422nd Regiment, 1st Battalion, L Company.

The mess kitchens were set up on the edge of Schlausenbach, a town near the Siegfried Line, and the location of the 422nd Command Post. The towns of Auw and Roth, early targets of the German attack at the North Shoulder, were less than five miles away. December 15, 1944 Dad and Joe met at the 589th Field Artillery Service Battery position, three miles south of Schoenberg just off the Schoenberg/Bleialf road. After the visit, Joe spent the night at an officer's billet, and Dad went back to the front line. They would not see each other again until after the war. Both of them were captured on December 19th and spent the remainder of the war as POW's.

On page 147 of Colonel Dupuys' book, "St. Vith Lion In The Way" Dad made notes indicating that Joe was among the men in the "Three jeeploads of volunteers..." trying to escape towards Bleialf. Joe was held in Stalag IX B - Bad Orb; then Oflag XIII B, Hammelburg; and was marched ninety miles from Hammelburg to Stalag VII A in Mooseburg. At the time of his capture, Joe received extra attention from the Germans as his blue Air Force uniform stood out from the others.

Dad also left a few other notes and highlighted other passages in the book. He shared with me that he was captured at 11 am in a forested ravine (probably just west of Laudensburg) when tanks and German troops arrived at the top of the ravine. He also spoke of a German soldier who hit him in his lower back with the butt of his rifle during a march - and how scared he was when British Mosquito bombs landed all around them in Limberg one night. But, other than those, he never spoke of anything that occurred between the dates of December 16th and his voyage home aboard the USS Westpoint in early 1945.

source: son John Collier 12/19/2019



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