

## John J. Crawford

590 Field Artillery,  
106 Infantry Division



Pfc. John Crawford



John With His Wife

John J. Crawford's career in the Army began December 23, 1943 at New Cumberland, PA where he was processed for six days and classified as a clerk. He then went to Fort Bragg, N.C. for 17 weeks of basic training. After Basic, some of his group went to Kentucky. He was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana. He became part of 106th Division assigned to 590th Field Artillery. After this training, he went to Fort Miles Standish, and later left Boston for England and landing in Liverpool. After three weeks, he left on a L.S.T for Roen, France.

On Dec. 10th, 1944 Jack and his crew arrived at their position relieving the 2nd Division. Their positions had already been set up for them. It was quiet for a few days. They seemed to become confused, moving to different positions. On the morning of December 19th they were shelled heavily. They were in a valley surrounded by trees. As John came out of the woods, his unit was told to throw down their guns. This was 12/19/44

Luckily John ran back and got his overcoat as they marched for three days in the bitter cold. At night they slept huddled together to keep warm. They were finally packed into boxcars for more traveling. John's group was bombed one night by their Allies who did not know they were in the cars. Their Sergeant managed to climb out open the doors and they all scrambled for cover until it was over.

On Christmas day, they arrived at their destination, **Stalag IX-B**, Bad Orb, Germany. John's first meal was grass soup. Later they received potato soup, which was a little better.

There was very little food, showers were few, and body lice were plentiful. After a shower, they put the same clothes back on. The toilet was a hole in the floor.

One night a German guard was killed in the kitchen. John and others were forced to line up outside until the man was discovered. John got the flu for about a week and was sent to the hospital barracks. Some of the guys gave him extra blankets for his suffering.

John's group received a few Red Cross packages, which were divided up among the men. One man used to sing the Don McNeil Breakfast Club theme song to cheer the group up. John's camp was finally liberated on April 2nd, 1945, the day after Easter. John stayed for another week to help out, during which time he was asked to guard a couple of the German guards. They were older men and really scared.

On John's return they came back through Camp Lucky Strike where there was plenty of food waiting for them and sailed from LeHarve, France for the U.S.A. to Camp Kilmer and later to Ft. Dix, N.J. where John received a 60 day furlough and later returned to Asheville, N.C. and then to Camp Swift, Texas, where he was discharged on November 23rd, 1945.

He later married Theresa (Heisse) on September 11, 1948 and had 3 sons and 3 daughters. They now have 3 grandsons and 5 granddaughters.

Source: <http://www.axpow.org/crawfordjohn.htm>



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