

Col. George L. Descheneaux
422nd Infantry Regiment, Commanding Officer
106th Infantry Division
Stalags 12-A & Oflag 79

"We're being slaughtered. I don't believe in fighting for glory if it won't accomplish anything. It looks like we'll have to pack it in."

Col. George Descheneaux, 422nd Infantry Regiment Commander, December 19, 1944

George L. Descheneaux was born December 30, 1908. He graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1932, and the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga. in 1937.

During 1940-42 he was with the 6th Division, serving, in turn, as a company commander, battalion executive officer, battalion commander, and regimental plans and training officer of the 3rd Infantry Regt. While with the 6th Division, he also held the post of assistant adjutant general.

Col. Descheneaux was with the 5th Army in 1943 as a War Department observer, serving as liaison officer between the 5th Army Headquarters and the front line divisions in Italy.

After a short period as assistant G-3 of the 2nd Army Headquarters, Col. Descheneaux was assigned to the 106th Division as assistant chief of staff in charge of the G-3 section shortly before the division was activated.

Descheneaux assumed command of the 422nd Infantry Regiment, 106th Infantry Division, in July 1944.

"Much of combat action in this war is made up of semi-independent, and often isolated operations on the part of small units. A great deal depends on how well these units function. I am convinced that the greatest stress should be placed on individual and small unit training and on the development of small unit leaders."

-Col Descheneaux, upon receiving command of the 422nd IR, July 1944

The 106th Infantry Division arrived in the ETO in early December 1944, and replaced the 2nd Infantry Division in the Schnee Eifel sector of Belgium on December 11.

On December 16, 1944, in a quiet sector in the Ardennes forest, the Germans launched a major counter offensive which would become known as The Battle Of the Bulge. Fighting on throughout the day and night, many elements of the American army found themselves surrounded by superior German infantry and armored troops. By December 17th the 422nd Infantry Regiment under Col. Descheneaux and the 423rd IR (Col. Cavender) were completely surrounded.

After an abortive attempt to break out of their encirclement at the village of Schoenberg, both Descheneaux and Cavender had decided that further resistance was futile.

"I'm going to save as many men as I can, and I don't give a damn if I'm court-martialed," Descheneaux said. It was agreed that Lt. Col. Frederick W. Nagel, the wounded executive officer of the 423rd, would negotiate for both regiments, since he

spoke German. The German lieutenant whom Nagel brought back to the American lines with him could not speak English but did speak French, a language Descheneaux understood, so the commander of the 422nd himself worked out the details. By the afternoon of December 19, Descheneaux and Cavender had surrendered their regiments—the largest mass surrender of US troops in the ETO.

Descheneaux and the other members of the two regiments were taken prisoner. Col. Descheneaux served as a POW in [Stalag XII-A](#) until the end to the war. He retired from the Army in 1946, citing tuberculosis contracted while he was a POW.

Col. George Descheneaux died July 14, 1984.



Col. Descheneaux's medals, including Bronze Star, American Campaign, American Defense, EAME Medal, World War II Victory medal, and POW medal



Col Descheneaux's officially engraved Bronze Star



Combat Infantryman's Badge, collar brass, and nameplate from framed display



106th Division patches and sword knot.



Col. Descheneaux's Stalag XIIB POW dog tag.



Col. Descheneaux's American dog tags.

Source: <http://www.purplehearts.net/descheneaux/descheneaux.htm>

November 18, 2016
Mr. West,

I am the grandson of George L. Descheneaux Jr. and was reviewing your web site. Great site by the way. I enjoyed revisiting the history of the Golden Lions.

From time to time, I review any information on the internet, books etc. to ensure the accuracy of his quotes, dates etc. As you might know, it is frustrating to see misquotes in books, articles which takes an act of congress to have them changed.

I noticed in reviewing your POW section that my grandfather is mentioned that he was in Stalag IIA, Limburg and Stalag IX-B, Bad Orb, POW camps. My grandfather in transition to his final POW camp was housed at only one Stalag's and one Durlag and finally housed in Brunswick, Germany (OFLAG-79) in accordance to his POW diary.

Here is his journey after capture.

12/19/1944	Arrived at Schonberg, Germany
12/20/1944	Arrived at Wittlick, Germany

12/22/1944	Arrived at Koblenz, Germany
12/22/1944	Arrived at Limburg, Germany (Stalag XII-A)
01/02/1945	Arrived at Wetzlar-Durlag-Luft
01/06/1945	Returned to Limburg, Germany (Stalag XII-A)
01/18/1945	Left Limburg, Germany (Stalag XII-A)
01/22/1945	Arrived Brunswick, Germany (OFLAG-79)
04/12/1945	Liberated 04/12/1945

Thank you!

Very Respectfully,

James G. Ormsby

Gunnery Sergeant, USMC (Ret.)



Page last revised
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