

Bernard C. Strohmier
589th Field Artillery Battalion
Battery "B"
Loretto PA
Stalag 12-A



I was drafted into the Army in March 1943, from a draft board in Ebensburg, PA.

I arrived in Fort Jackson, SC Being a young man, never being away from home before, I had no idea what to expect. In a strange State, and unfamiliar surroundings , I was assigned to the 106th Inf. Div. Battery "B" 589th FAB. I had no idea what this meant, or even that this was a new Division, being formed.

Not long after it was activated, on March 13,1943, The grueling training started. We were the first of the eighteen year old draftees, in the Army. Now the Army had to find out how much these young kids could take. They gave us any and all the hardest problems, they could come up with, we passed them with flying colors. We spent more time sleeping in the woods, than in a barracks. We became known as the bag lunch Division and nicknamed us "The Hungry and Sick division.

After Tennessee Maneuvers, (again, we didn't even get a break. The Weather did not cooperate. It was raining and cold, most of the time. We went to Camp Atterbury, Indiana. From the time we were activated until now we had lost over half of our very well trained Officers and enlisted men. Now we had a very short time, to train all our new replacements. These were very intelligent men. They came from Army Air Corp., Army Specialized Training Programs (ASTP) Coast Artillery and AAA Artillery units. They sure didn't want to be in an Infantry Div. After they realized that this is the way it is going to be, they were fast learners. After a short period of training, we went over to England.

Our Battery "B", supported the Infantry. On Dec.16 1944, the Battle of the Bulge started. Again we were in the wrong place. After a tremendous artillery barrage, the German army came at us in full force. The 422nd, was over run and early on Dec. 17th, we were forced to pull out and take up new positions. After many set-ups, to provide Artillery cover for small units in and around St. Vith, Belgium, we arrived at a crossroads, not far from Bastogne, Belgium on Dec.19. Our Major Parker, now decided, this is as far as we go backwards. Here we stand and fight. This we did.

At this point, out of the twelve 105 Howitzers, that we had, on Dec.16, there were only three left. Time and again, the 2nd Panzer Division, tried to come through us, but we pushed them back. On Dec. 24th, around 4:30PM we were under a tremendous artillery barrage. At that time I was in a fox hole. The barrage was so heavy I had no chance to get back to the rest of the men. The house was hit a few times and was burning. As soon as the shelling stopped, the tanks and Infantry had us surrounded. That was the end of my time in combat.

I was taken Prisoner of War, the worst time of my life. I was liberated late in April, 1945, by the ninth Armored Division, between Limberg, and Frankfort Germany. A terrific bunch of guys. They couldn't do enough for us. We were taken by Jeep to a makeshift airfield and flown to Paris, France. They feed us and we got very sick. Then came Blood transfusions, and Blood Plasma, also liquid transfusions to combat dehydration. [Stalag XII-A Limburg.](#)

At first the POWs were given, as much food as they wanted, it was fatal to some and made many others very sick. After so many months with very little and not very good food, the body could not take it.

After a few days, they flew us to England 119 General Hospital.

After three months I was flown to the United States. and discharged in June of 1946.

I took a job as a Guard in the Cambria County Prison for three years. Then I became a Rural Mail Carrier for thirty two years and retired. I have been a private Pilot since 1946, and have a private Airport beside my house. I still enjoy flying as a recreation. My wife Virginia and I have three Children, and four Grand children.

Bernard C Strohmier

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I was with the 106th btry "B" 589th from march 13,1943 did maneuvers in Tennessee and Camp Atterbury, Miles Standish, Boston. Went over on the Wakefield, to Awe Germany, Two other skirmishes, and Braque De Fraiture.

Captured went to various German cities then to a Labor camp at Trier, then to Limberg, Stalag 12-A and was liberated from a train on the way to Frankford.

Spent time in the 19 General Hospital in England. Was flown home in July 1945 and discharged in July 1946. End of army career.

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