

**Paul T. Kinney**  
*Company C, 423rd Regiment*  
*106th Infantry Division*  
*Unknown POW Camp*  
*German Hospital*

November 11, 2006 - 'Mrs. Kinney's son is safe' At 81, W.W.II veteran looks back



Paul T. Kinney dropped out of high school at 17, enlisted in the Army and served as an infantry soldier in World War II. He survived serious head injuries and among other things, became the first dean of the college of business at Chico State University. (Bill Husa/Enterprise-Record)

When Paul T. Kinney was 17, he dropped out of high school. "It was 1943. I was just bored with it," he said.

He did what a lot of young American boys and men were doing. He enlisted in the Army so he could serve during World War II.

Kinney was assigned to [Company C, 423rd Regiment, 106th Infantry Division](#). His training was in Mississippi and Indiana, and he remembers traveling aboard the Queen

Elizabeth.

"It was the fastest ship at the time. There were 22 of us to a state room, and it was quite a ride."

Kinney, 81, was sent to Germany during the war, and didn't serve long before he was seriously wounded in Belgium.

"I was a platoon runner — I delivered messages from the sergeant to the scouts," he said. "There was lot of snow. One night I was out on patrol and a German artillery shell exploded in front of me. It seemed like shrapnel was coming down fast, on top of me.

"Apparently my unit was forced to evacuate. When I woke up in daylight, I seemed to be alone. A German medic found me and took me to a German field hospital where I had surgery and stayed for several days. The hospital was a converted, two-story apartment building."

A piece of shrapnel had gone into his right eye, and exited through his left ear. "I had some pretty severe head injuries."

He remembers his Belgian roommate. Different cultures prevented a friendship. "We couldn't speak a word to each other," Kinney said.

Although he was wounded, Kinney was a prisoner of war and the hospital doubled as a prison. "I ended up at a hospital in Bad Nauehim, Germany for four months until the U.S. Army captured the area in April 1945."

He remembers seeing the Americans march by. "I yelled out the window, 'Hey, I'm an American!' and they picked me up."

Kinney and the other American POWs were sent back to the U.S. "I stayed at Dibble Army Hospital near Palo Alto. I'd had a serious head injury; I could walk — but not far. I stayed at Dibble for about a year, and was discharged from the Army in March 1946."

Kinney said he was considered 100 percent disabled upon his discharge, and that was later reduced to 90 percent. His disability remained at that level all his life.

He has spent the rest of his life with one plastic eye and has used hearing aides ever since, too. He has a Purple Heart and a couple of other ribbons and medals that testify to his war experiences.

Once discharged from the hospital and the Army, he got his G. E. D at San Jose State University. He continued at the university until he received a bachelor's degree in economics.

Kinney's first job was working nights as an inventory control clerk. "I worked at San Jose Water Works for several months. One night I fell asleep posting books ... I thought I just had to do something better."

By then married, he took his wife and three small children to southern California. "I was eligible for financial aide from the military to pursue a graduate degree. I skipped a master's degree and got a Ph.D. in finance at University of Southern California."

Kinney went to work as assistant professor of finance at University of Illinois in Urbana, Ill., later returning to California to work in a similar position at Fullerton State University.

In 1968, he moved to Chico to teach finance and handle administrative duties at Chico State University. He became the first dean of the College of Business there, and retired as professor emeritus in 1986.

Kinney's first wife, Jodie, is deceased. Their three children are grown and he has four grandchildren.

He and his second wife, Fritz Kinney, have been married 34 years and live in Chico. She accompanies him to annual reunions of 106th Infantry Survivors. This year's reunion was in October in New Jersey.

"Every year, the group gets smaller," said Fritz. "This year there were 62 veterans. Paul never used to talk about the war until we started going to these reunions. At that time, Americans felt we were going to be invaded by Japan. There was a real sense of patriotism."

Kinney looks at his Purple Heart and other memorabilia from World War II. "I did my duty in the Army— but I was glad to get out," he said.

Fritz remembers a story Kinney's mother, now deceased, told. "She was a lithographer for the San Jose News. It was very hard for families during the war, there was no way to communicate with soldiers overseas. For a while Paul was missing in action, and after she finally got a phone call from him, the headline on the front page was 'Mrs. Kinney's son is safe.' " MARY NUGENT , Enterprise-Record - Chico,CA,USA



Page last revised  
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Deceased 14 Nov 2012 (aged 87) Chico, Butte County, California, USA