#13

106TH

AG & SF RS
Miami Beach, Florida
25 September 1945

Memo to: Former Members of the 422d Inf:

1. Purpose. This bulletin is an attempt to furnish you with the available information on casualties, awards, etc. pertaining to the 422d Inf and to bring you a message from your former Regimental Commander, Colonel Descheneaux, who is hospitalized in Fitzsimmons General Hospital, Denver, Colorado, as a result of tuberculosis, which he contracted while a POW. Please make this bulletin available to any former 422d men who may be near you.

2. Summary of Combat Operations. The 422d Inf went into combat in the Schnee-Eiffel Area of Germany on 10 December 1944. On 16 December, the regiment was hit by the German Ardennes counter-offensive, and was quickly cut off. Several sectors of the regimental zone received heavy artillery fire and ground attacks, all of which were repulsed. Co "L" and CN Co counter-attacked towards AUW on the afternoon of 16 December and prevented the Regimental CP, AT Co and Cn Co areas from being overrun. On the night of 17 December, the 2d Bn was swung around facing north, to meet a threat from strong enemy forces which had outflanked us. On 18 December, orders by radio from Division Headquarters directed the 422d Inf, in conjunction with the 423d Inf, to attack and destroy enemy forces at Schonberg, and continue along the Schonberg St Vith road and clear the enemy from that road, which was originally our principal supply route. Meanwhile, the 7th and 9th Armored Divisions were committed in the vicinity of St Vith, where the 106th Div CP and other installations had been located, but they were unable to stop the German drive at that point. The 422d Inf made an extremely well-executed cross-country withdrawal during the day and night of 18 December, to assembly position southeast of Schonberg, and attacked towards Schonburg on the morning of 19 December. They quickly came under small arms and artillery fire from several directions, and the 1st Bn, on the right, was attacked by tanks and part of the Bn was cut off and captured. The 2d and 3d Bns continued the attack towards Schonburg and came under intense fire from several types of weapons of a large enemy antiaircraft unit, which inflicted heavy casualties and knocked out a number of our mortars and machine guns. The 423d Inf on our left had sustained heavy casualties, was badly disorganized, and later was almost entirely captured or surrendered. In the afternoon of 19 December, having had no re-supply of food or ammunition, or evacuation of casualties for the past four days, Colonel Descheneaux decided to surrender that part of the regiment. Parts of the 1st Bn, Co "G", Co "H", and men from other units found their way to the Regimental Motor Park, and held out until 21 December. Co "L" escaped almost intact through the German encirclement, and moved west, but ran into enemy positions on the night of 20 December, and were captured after sustaining many casualties. The majority of the vehicles and personnel of Regt Hq Co, AT Co and Cn Co, which had remained in the assembly area, tried to force a way out to the west, but ran into mine fields and artillery fire and were captured or surrendered. All of the regiment was killed or captured except 9 officers and about 70 men. The regiment was re-constituted in France on 10 April 1945, and has since rejoined the 106th Division.

3. Events after Capture. Most of the regiment was marched about 50 km to Gerolstein and from there was marched or moved by box car further into Germany. A large part of the officers and men went to Bad Orb. Others were scattered throughout German POW Camps. A number of officers reached Poland, from which they made a winter march of several hundred kilometers, finally arriving at Hammelburg, where the officers from Bad Orb meanwhile had been moved. The Hammelburg Camp was liberated by a raiding force from the 4th Armored Division on 27 March but most of those liberated were recaptured before they could reach the American lines, and were marched back into Germany, finally being liberated at Moosburg and other places in the Munich area about the last of April. Bad Orb and other camps were also liberated in April and returned via Camp Lucky Strike or through hospitals. A few officers and men were liberated in Eastern Germany by the Russians and evacuated via Russia. Many members were killed or died while Prisoners of War.

4. Message from Col. Descheneaux:

"Fitzsimmons General Hospital
Denver, Colorado
20 August 1945

Members of the 422d Inf Regt:

The war in which we took such a brief and tragic part is over. Most of us were fortunate enough to have returned to our families and friends. Time will dim but never entirely erase the memory of our trying experiences. I have found, however through conversations with many former members of our regiment confined in this hospital, that information as to our mission and the circumstances leading to our capture are not fully known. Events happened so fast and under such difficult circumstances that it is understandable why such information did not reach everyone. I hope that this bulletin will serve to clarify that undesirable situation.

As to our part, after we were cut off we were ordered to leave our positions on Schnee-Eiffel and to attack and destroy a German Panzer Combat Team on the Schonberg St Vith Road, after which we were to proceed to St Vith and then west from there. We were almost entirely surrounded and in order to reach Schonberg we had to move across country. I was separated from you not long after capture, and with few exceptions, have seen none of you since. It was only after my arrival here, and through correspondence with officers and men of the various companies, that I have been able to get a fairly complete picture of many details of the attack. We ran into a trap near Schonberg and were subjected to heavy fire from nearly all directions and by tanks and artillery. By the afternoon it became evident that the accomplishment of our mission was impossible. It became further evident that there was little we could do to help any operation. The paramount question became that of saving the lives of as many of you men as possible and every possible action to accomplish this was discussed. Our situation was rendered hopeless by our great distance behind our lines, the weather, our ammunition supply, and many other factors. And so, though my spirit revolted against such a decision, surrender seemed to be the only solution to avoid needless loss of life and further suffering. I am convinced that there was nothing else to do and I know that opinion is shared by most every one of you.

It is my sincere desire, and that of all our officers, to secure the recognition and awards which so many of you richly deserve for gallantry and meritorious service. This may be slow, due to administrative difficulties, but you may be sure that many deserving cases will be recommended for awards as soon as full information can be secured in proper form. The Combat Infantryman Badge was awarded to all Infantrymen of the Regiment and the Medical Badge to members of the Medical Detachment, and Regimental Colors of the 422d Inf recently were appropriately decorated as a Combat Regiment at a Division Review in the ETO.

I wish all of you the best of luck, and whatever course your lives may take in the future, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for having made it possible for me to be as proud of his officers, men, and regiment as any commander ever could be.

Sincerely,
(Signed) GEORGE L. DESCHENEAUX, JR.
Colonel, Inf."

5. Promotions: All officers and EM who were POW's receive an interview at the Redistribution Station or hospital, which is considered by a special board of officers in Washington, to make promotion in cases of those whose service, position held and other factors indicate that they presumably would have been promoted had they not been captured. A letter was also written to this board, giving details of the situation which existed in the 422d Inf., and providing information calculated to effect promotion of the maximum number of deserving cases. W.D. Circular No. 185, dated 21 June 1945, provides for restoration to grade under certain conditions, of non-commissioned officers who were reduced without prejudice because no suitable assignment was available. See your unit personnel officer for details.

6. Combat Infantryman and Medical Badges: The officers and men who were present with the regiment when the German counter-offensive began on 16 December 1944 were awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, retroactive to 16 December 1944

(including the additional pay), on Letter Orders #140, Subject: Combat Infantryman Badge, The Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D. C. Medical Badges were awarded to all members of the Medical Detachment, but I do not have the order number available. If you have not received your Badge, see your unit commander or write to The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.

7. Unit Awards: All members of the 422d Inf. who were POW's are entitled to wear two bronze stars, one for the Rhineland Campaign and one for the Ardennes Campaign, Any member who joined American forces and engaged in combat after escape or liberation, as did a number of those who were liberated at Hammelburg, is entitled also to a bronze star for the campaign of Central Germany.

8. Individual Awards and Decorations: I have heard many accounts of splendid performances by members of our regiment, including some who were killed. Some of these have been recommended for awards, but most cases will never receive the recognition they deserve unless persons who have knowledge of the facts will make suitable statements on which to base recommendations. If you are not equipped to prepare the recommendation yourself, I will undertake to prepare and forward an appropriate recommendation for any individual action for which you will furnish me the essential information. A sworn statement is required (officers only may make a certificate), stating the facts in your own words. Be sure to include the name of the person to be recommended, the location, date, time, weather, visibility, casualties, nature of the terrain, enemy activity and location, the effect of the deed, and any other information which will serve to give a true picture of the action. Submit statements in triplicate, and either give me the name of another witness, or say in your statement that you were the only known witness, as statements from two witnesses are normally required, in order to support the letter of recommendation. If you know of cases deserving of awards, please prepare your recommendations, or submit the necessary statements to me without delay. Address statements to Lt Col. Joseph C. Matthews, Jr., Western Boulevard, Route #4, Raleigh, North Carolina.

9. It is estimated that the 422d Inf sustained casualties of approximately 100 killed and 750 wounded, including deaths and injuries sustained after capture. The following list of those killed is not complete, but is the most accurate available at this time:

Lt Col Thomas Kent, Hq 1st Bn
Capt Wm H Perkins, Co M
Capt Julius Hene, Medics
1st Lt John M Krol, Regt Hq Co
1st Lt Wm B Brice, Co B
1st Lt Emmit I Harman, Jr, Co H
1st Lt Clifford F Blacke, Medics
1st Lt Richard C. Diamon, Medics
1st Lt Norman A. Engle, Co K
1st Lt Thorold J. B. Sharitz, Co B
1st Lt Karl Luck, Co A
1st Lt Leon Kastenbaum, AT Co
2d Lt Bernard M. Christensen, Co L
2d Lt George E Hammond, Co H
1st Sgt Douglas J. Reichenau, AT Co
T Sgt Samuel F. Baxter, Co H
T Sgt James F. Melton, Co M
S Sgt Laverne E. Borreson, Co M
S Sgt Raymond F. Jones, Co H
S Sgt Robert J. King, Co M
S Sgt George E. Thomas, SvCo
T 4 Patrick V. Thomas, Regt Hq Co
S Sgt Paul Wanamaker, Hq 3d Bn
Sgt Steve J. Koscak, Co 3
Sgt Thomas W. Ahlberg, Co G
Sgt Claude E. Brown, Co H
Sgt Charles L. Rizzoli, Co H
Tec 5 Harry Washer, Co G
Pvt Charles P. Gulios, Co E
Pvt John J. Heagney, Co B
Pvt Nicholas J. LoSavio, Co B
Pvt Anthony H. Pandini, Co L
Pvt Earl D. Pierce, Reg Hq Co
Pvt John J. Rogosienski, Co D
Pfc Leonard Golardi, Co M
Pfc George A. Anderson, Co C
Pfc Carl A. Aylesworth, Co H
Pfc Saul Bard, Co G
Pfc Murray Brenner, Co E
Pfc Bert E. Butler, Co H
Pfc Wm J. Cannon, Co B
Pfc Eli Cohen, Co I
Pfc Louis A. Croce, Hq 2d Bn
Pfc Charles G. Frair, Co B
Pfc Sheldon N. Franklin, Hq 3d Bn
Pvt Norvel E. Ingle, Medics
Pfc Charles A Lubke, Regt Hq Co
Pfc William B. Kempf, Co E
Pfc Don S. Kinzer, Co F
Pfc David S. Mueller, Co M
Pfc _____ Porter, Hq 1st Bn
Pfc Raymond L. Obert, Co H
Pfc Arthur S. Rosen, Co F
Pfc Hayden Seymour, Co G
Pfc Duane P. Ward, Co L
Pfc Harry H. Weissinger, Co G
Pfc Earl F. Ballew, Medics
Pfc Robert H. Wilson, Co H
T 4 Robert J. Burns, Hq 3d Bn
Pvt Antonio Carraturo, Hq 2d Bn
Pvt Charles H. Clark, Regt Hq Co
Pfc Von W. Gordon, Co E
Pvt Philip F. Greenspan, Co A
Pvt Milton Rothman, Co B
Pvt Donald S. Rowe, Co F
Pvt John W. Thomas, Hq 2d Bn
Pvt John P. Viborka, Co B
Pvt John B. Wharton, Co G
Pvt Creslow P. Zguzenski, Co F

10. Conclusion. I regret that space does not permit me to reprint the tributes paid to our Division by the Secretary of War, General Eisenhower, amd other high commanders, nor to bring you many warm expressions of pride and appreciation of their comrades which have come to me from officers and men of our regiment. I am equally proud to have been a member of the 422d Inf and to have served in combat with such men. Those who gave their lives will be remembered with deepest respect and reverence. Both for myself and for the many who would welcome the opportunity, I wish you the best of luck in all things, wherever you may be.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH C. MATTHEWS, JR.
Lt Col, INF
(Formerly Regt Exec Off, 422d I