



Johnnie R. Beaver "H" Company, 2d Battalion, 423rd Regiment 106th Infantry Division

Some time after the War II started I was working in Virginia for a constructing company building a "SeaBee" camp between Newport News, Va. and Williamsburg, Va., then to building a POE Camp near Newport News, Va., Camp Patrick Henry. From these to building a mobile home park at Portsmouth, Va. for shipyard workers.

Married, with a wife and son, everything was rationed and I thought that things were bad, never knowing that life was going to get far worse than I had ever had it.

Uncle Sam wanted me, you know that "Greetings" letter.

Well, I went to Fort Bragg, N.C., then out to dusty, sandy Camp Walters, Texas where I spent the next seventeen weeks learning to be a "Soldier". That was in July of 1944. After my training I was sent to Fort Meade, Md. then to Fort Jackson, S.C. and on to **Camp Atterbury**, Ind.

There on a huge field we were sent to different groups until I landed in **Co. H, 423 Regiment, 2d Battalion, 106 division**. on an 81 mm mortar.

Left the states on the liner Queen Mary, which was not bad at all except for the food. It was terrible. We offloaded at Glasgow, Scotland then down to Morton-on-Marsh, England. I enjoyed the stay there but not for long, next we went to Southhampton and sailed for La Havre, France - that was one bombed out city.

We just passed thru on to Born, Belgium where we rested up waiting for our supplies to catch up with us. It seemed like a few days. Then came word for us to fall out after packing our barracks bags but to leave them there, the kitchen crew would bring them up to us. They never reached us.

We loaded onto trucks and with only the clothes we had on and headed out to the front. It was cold, the snow was deep and it was to be a quiet front up there, no fighting, so we had a 27 mile front to hold where a division may normally have from a 5 or a 10 mile front. We learned after it was all over, years later, that scouts came back and told that the Germans were building up a large force but it never got upstairs or did it.

I was on a hill outside of Schonberg, Belgium with my squad in a gun emplacement with our mortar. It had been quiet for a couple of days but in the a. m. of the 16th of Dec. about 5:30 it all started, "The Battle of the Bulge", right up against our division. The snow and fog was so bad that you could not see much and the Germans had flood 'lights they were shining up into the fog and back down on us.

We were use to seeing our own tanks and their size but never ones as large as those Tiger tanks of the German army, with what looked like telephone poles for gun barrels sticking out in front of them.

We fought them for three days and nights but then we ran out of ammo and food, they could not air drop us anything in because of the snow and fog so on the late evening of the 19th we were told to destroy our weapons and to try to escape to our own lines, we had lost several men.

My Lt. Philipson, our jeep driver Dopp, Louis Barton and myself piled into our jeep and headed out, we came to an open field and there was our kitchen truck knocked out, we stopped and got all the ration we could carry on us and then the Germans laid down a barrage on that field to keep us from crossing it when it was lifted we headed out across it and into some woods. On down that small dirt road we went but not far because there was a jeep knocked out and blocking the road, we bailed out. Dopp on the left side into a ditch and crawled on to freedom, the Lt. and myself out onto the right side and no where to go. We lost Barton back at the kitchen truck.

The Lt. was on his side directing fire to some GI's up on the side of the hill. I was at the back wheel when all of a sudden everything went black and when I came to the Lt. was telling me that he was hit. The Germans had fired a grenade into the jeep. I started to crawl to him when I felt the pain in my side, I was hit but slight, the Lt. had a bad hit in his back at the shoulder and then this German told me to stand up and I got the Lt. up and here we went into capture. It was an empty feeling. We were taken back and put into a building.

On the morning of the 20th Dec. we started marching, I managed to get the Lt. in a box car they were loading with prisoners but was unable to get on with him. (After years I found out that he made it.)

I had to keep walking. On Jan. 2 we got into the camp, Stalag 4B, half starved, because they would not feed us, took what we could from the fields, my feet were frozen and toes turning black.

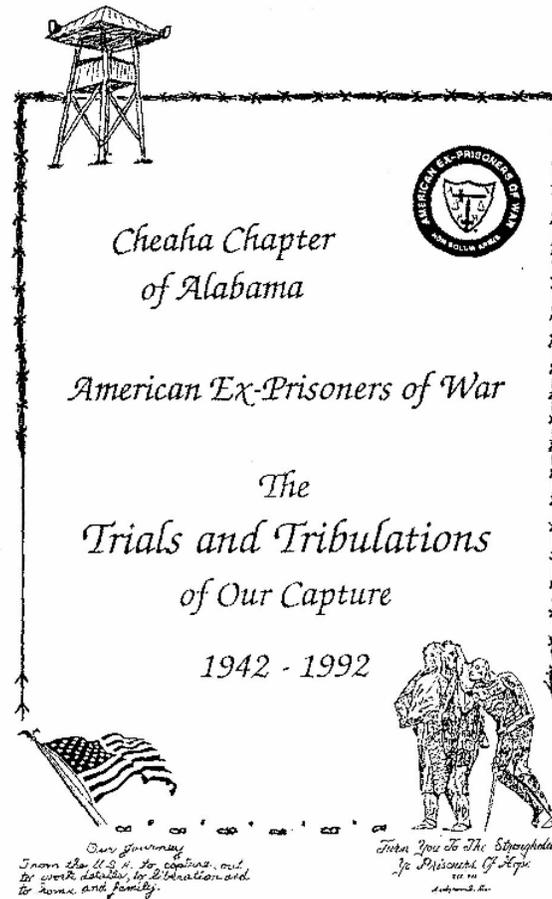
After a couple of weeks, I was put out on a work detail at Muhlberg, Germany along with a few others. One morning we lined up for detail and the German Sgt. wanted to know if anyone knew "Elect". I realized he wanted an electrician. I let him know that I knew but I went out any way but a few hours later he sent for me and he wanted a light put over his bed so he could read in bed. I took a couple of days to do it and he was pleased, next day he sent me to a hospital for my feet. My good turn paid off.

At the makeshift hospital in Halle, Germany they did what they could for me, after a couple of weeks there I was moved across town to a beer hall where they had quite a few prisoners because the allies were bombing everything.

A few days there I was liberated by the 104 Infantry Division and taken across the river to an air field and flown out to England. Stayed in a hospital there a month and then I was flown back to Now York. Next day I was flown to Lawson, General Hospital at Atlanta, GA and to my family.

I was stationed at Fort Benning, Ga. in the MP's as Editor of the detachment newspaper "Crossed Pistols."

After my discharged on Dec. 15, 1945 I came home and went to work in a local newspaper in Gainesville, Ga. and stayed in the business until I retired from an advertising company after 45 years of the printing business. I have one son and two daughters, all grown and married, my wife and I live near Muscadine, Al. on top of a mountain with a beautiful view, me with my wood working and my wife with her greenhouse and her garden. Life now is wonderful!



"A Walk in My Shoes" During the Battle of the Bulge in World War II

by
Johnnie R. Beaver

I was in the United States Army with the 106th Infantry Division, 423rd Regiment, "H" Company. I fought in the Battle of the Bulge at St. Vith, Belgium during World War II. I was taken prisoner of war (POW) by the Germans.

I hope that through these pages others may see what racism, communism, and war can do to people and their lives.

NOTE: None of the links below work. Apparently his website has been dropped. If any of you readers can contact him or his family, I would be very glad to post his entire site here. Jim West

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