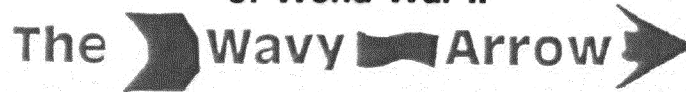


20th Combat Engineer Association of World War II



August 2010

Lost But Not Forgotten

Henry "Shorty" Roscoe Flowers (B/20th) died June 4, 2008, just three months shy of his 90th birthday. His sister, Gloria Flowers Norris (8194 Lakeshore Drive, Garner, NC 27529), writes "I apologize for not having notified you sooner of my brothers death. He was living independently until he suffered a heart attack and died from kidney failure. This was not his first heart attack. Back in 1993 when we were waiting in the emergency room waiting for him to be sent to Duke Hospital, he told me he never understood why he had survived World War II when so many of his buddies didn't. During the war, he had a special bond with everyone in his company. After the war, he enjoyed every minute of each reunion that he was able to attend, and he saved every copy of the *Wavy Arrow*. I listened and never tired of hearing every story he told of his WWII experiences. He was very proud of his service to his country. I would really like to receive each future issue of the *Wavy Arrow*."

Gladys Conley (widow of Woodrow Conley, B/1340th) died in April 2010 according to her son, Gill Conley residing at 1105 River Road, Sykesville, MD 217904-5514. His father, Woodrow Conley, died September 5, 2002.

Sally Brown Still Remembers

Sally Brown (330 South "S" Street, Livermore, CA 94550-4249) writes: "The recent issue of the *Wavy Arrow* brings back so many memories." [*The 20th Combat Engineer Regiment spent eight weeks at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, before they embarked overseas. Shortly after Camp Kilmer opened, off-duty soldiers from the 20th Engineers on their way to a bus trudged past our house on School Street in Piscataway Township, New Jersey. Sally Brown's father was sitting under the willow tree listening to Gabriel Heater's radio news broadcast, and invited them over so that Sally's mother could make coffee for them. Sally was only 14 years old and was delighted that our willow tree soon became a home away from home for many members of the 20th Engineers.*] Sally Brown's current letter continues: "Our lives in 1942 were so different from subsequent U.S. military actions. The civilian inconveniences (rationing and black-outs) were nothing compared to those faced by the 20th Engineers, but each of us was aware that we were a nation at war. Today a small group in my local community continues to meet one evening a month to hear the reading of names, ages, and home towns of our military men and women whose lives were sacrificed. We listen to taps and discuss how and wonder if humanity can live together in peaceful cooperation. The majority of residents seem unconcerned with either the dead or wounded. This doesn't seem real to them. I send a small contribution in memory of the men in the 20th who sat under our willow tree, and drank coffee with my parents so many years ago."

In Memory of Truman Setliffe

Jennifer Auld (Daughter of John & Maribel Auld) writes: I was saddened to learn of Truman Setliffe's passing. He was a wonderful friend of both my mother and father and he shared stories with me about my parents that I was either too young to remember or never heard before. My father served under Truman and valued him as an officer and as a friend. He was also very good at keeping in touch with my mother after my father's death and she looked forward to his phone calls every other month or so. He never forgot her wedding anniversary (after all Truman gave her away at the wedding that was held in Sart le Spa, Belgium) and he would call every February 2 to ask her if she remembered what she was doing on that day in 1945. I know that Truman is keeping everyone entertained up above and is having a great union with those who went before him."

Fred Miller Would Have Been Very Proud

Neysa A. Miller (Widow of Frederick Miller, H&S/20th) writes, "Our family enjoys reading each issue of the *Wavy Arrow*, especially our son. My husband would have been very proud of the job you are doing with the newsletter. [Editor's Note: Frederick Miller served from 1989 to 1996 as secretary-treasurer of the 20th Combat Engineers Association of WWII, and he died in 1999.] Neysa continues: "We are all very busy with graduations, dances, and recitals. I expect to be a great-grandmother any day now; it will be my first."

Dr. Zimmerman Provides Information

James C. Zimmerman, dental surgeon for the 1171st group during World War II provides the following information contained in the publication entitled *Omaha D-Day Beach*. Author Joseph Balkowski wrote, "V Corps commander Leonard Gerow recognized the 20th Engineers, a unit that opened the Moroccan port of Casablanca to American shipping shortly after the North African invasion on November 8, 1942. In January 1943, the 20th Engineers provided security for the Casablanca summit attended by U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, British prime minister Winston Churchill, and other military officials. But the 20th D-Day task, which was required to open Omaha Beach, the largest of Normandy's five beach exits, promised to make their earlier work seem easy in comparison." We are delighted to receive this information from Dr. Zimmerman whose mailing address is 460 East Marium Street, Nappanee, IN 46550.

Website on 20th History

Bruce J. Porter (Colonel, US Army, Retired) who served as commander of the 20th Engineer Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas, from 1994 to 1996, continues as webmaster for the website at <www.20thEngineers.com/ww2.html>. He writes, "I scan each issue of the *Wavy Arrow* and post it on my website and there are links to our newsletter on both the home page and on the WWII page." The present 20th Engineer Battalion commander Col. Peter B. Andrysiak, Jr. reports on various activities of the 20th since arriving in Afghanistan and takes note of veterans who have recently been killed in action. Your editor recently sent Col. Porter more than 100 World War II photographs that were compiled, organized, and captioned by Captain Joseph W. Miller who led his platoon ashore on D-Day at Normandy.

Not One, But Two 20th Combat Engineers

Your editor George Griffenhagen moved to the retirement community of Westminster at Lake Ridge, Virginia, on June 30th. His new address is 12226 Cathedral Drive, Woodbridge, Virginia 22192. He can now be reached on his cell phone, 703-966-1739, and he can be contacted by e-mail at <dcsmith3477@gmail.com>. Lo and behold, your editor discovered that another 20th Engineer veteran was already living at Westminster. He is Henry Linton Smith who is living in Apartment 234 with the mailing address of 12191 Clipper Drive, Woodbridge, Virginia 22192. His telephone number is 703-494-1377.

Born February 3, 1922 in Alexandria, Virginia, Henry Smith graduated early in 1943 as 2nd Lt. from the Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He was then immediately shipped to North Africa where in May 1943 he joined Company C of the 20th Combat Engineer Regiment in Tunisia. He saw his first military action on July 10, 1943, during the invasion of Licata, Sicily, in support of the 3rd Infantry Division. While working on the construction of a bridge, Henry encountered General George Patton. 20th Battalion commander Col. Edmund Daley had told Henry not to let anyone drive on the cement leading up to the bridge abutment until it hardened, but along came General Patton in a jeep. Henry told Patton that he couldn't drive on the new cement. When the General took out one of his pearl-handled pistols, Henry countered by waving his carbine at the General. The face-off ended when Captain Clarence Magee permitted the General to ride his jeep over the cement.

After having been shipped to Great Britain with the 20th, Henry was transferred to Company A of the 20th Battalion under command of Captain Henry Doherty. On June 6, 1944, as the Higgen's boat with Henry's platoon approached the Normandy beaches, they unexpectedly landed miles from *Omaha Beach* on the British *Gold Beach*. Henry and his platoon remained for three days with the British troops until they found their way back to 20th Battalion commanded by Col. Jonathon Sonnefield. After his promotion as 1st. Lt., all went well for Henry until he was wounded in Luxembourg on April 4, 1944. Henry was sent back to a hospital in England, and did not return to the 20th until just before the December 1944 Battle of the Bulge. Henry celebrated the end of WWII on May 7, 1945, with the 20th in Czechoslovakia.

After World War II ended, Henry joined the reserves who were called up for active duty for the Berlin Airlift. He then went to flight school in Waco, Texas, where he learned to pilot single engine *L5s* and *L16s*. When the Korean conflict erupted on June 25, 1950, he was shipped to Korea as an engineer where he spent 15 months under the command of General Matthew Ridgeway. Henry participated in the September 1950 invasion of Inchon, Korea, and flew in 1,800 hours of combat missions which earned him a promotion to Captain. After 22 years in the military, Henry was promoted to Major and retired in 1964.

Once he returned to civilian life, Henry sold real estate in northern Virginia, to support his three children through college. He had married Leonardo Koenig in 1949 who died in 2000 two days after their 50th wedding anniversary. Henry then moved to Florida where his mobil home was badly damaged by Hurricane Charlie. On July 3, 2008, he moved into Westminster where he and your editor can now exchange stories about their respective lives, including their two-and-a-half years of overseas service with the 20th Combat Engineers.

Tracking Down A Veteran

Sally Brown (described earlier) wanted to track down one of the 20th Engineer veterans whom she met at her home in 1941 before he embarked overseas. His name is **Philip Custis Ortega**. She contacted your editor who was able to tell her, "The only information that I have for Phillip Oretga is that he was wounded twice, once on May 17, 1943 in North Africa, and again in the Hurtgen Forest on November 8, 1944. He survived World War II, but I do not have the date of his death." Since she had a 1941 mailing address for Oretga's family in New Orleans on the back of a photograph, Sally Brown did an internet search of the Social Security Index and found that Philip Custin Ortega is listed as having died in Jefferson, Louisiana, in 1988. She is now trying to locate any family members of Ortega so she can share the photograph with them since it would have sentimental value. Others might also try Sally's efforts to search the Social Security Index website to track down a long-lost 20th Engineer veteran.

A History of Combat Engineers

In ancient times, combat engineers were responsible for building field fortifications, temporary camps, and roads. The most notable were the Romans who constructed catapults, battering rams, and siege towers. In the Middle Ages, combat engineers were responsible for the penetration of castles and fortification. When cannon first appeared, combat engineers were responsible for their maintenance.

By the 18th century combat engineers moved at the head of marching columns with axes, shovels, and pickaxes to clear obstacles and build bridges to open the way for the troops to move through difficult terrain. They had the distinction of wearing long work aprons and the right to wear beards.

(Prepared from excerpts of *Wikipedia*, the free Internet encyclopedia.)

Wavy Arrow Contributions

We thank the following for making a contribution to keep the *Wavy Arrow* coming to you.

Jennifer Auld (Daughter of John & Maribel Auld)	\$25.00
Sally Brown (330 South "S" Street, Livermore, CA 94550-4249)	\$36.00
Neysa A. Miller (Widow of Frederick Miller, H&S/20th)	\$25.00
Gloria Flowers Norris (Sister of Henry Flowers, B/20th)	\$25.00

Send Letters, Articles, Photographs, Obituaries, and other News Items for inclusion in future issues of the *Wavy Arrow* to editor George Griffenhagen, 12226 Cathedral Drive, Woodbridge, VA 22192-2232. His telephone number is 1-703-966-1739.