



Private First Class
US Army 94th Infantry Division
WWII

Serial Number: 33526767

Purple Heart Recipient
Battle of the Bulge-Ardennes Forest

Born: 30 Aug 1922
Coeburn, VA

Enlistment Date: 4 Dec 1942
Abingdon, VA

RASNICK, BYRL HARDAWAY

The following is a copy of some memories of WWII by Byrl Rasnick, as told to his son Tom Rasnick in LaGrange, Ga. in January 2001. Byrl Rasnick was 78 years old at the time. He has been contacted recently by THE LEARNING CHANNEL for an interview regarding this subject. It is said that 1,000 WWII Veterans are dying off per day.

"I was drafted and went to Basic Training in Kansas and attended War Games in West Virginia (or Tennessee). I went to New York City and then went to England in 1944 on the Queen Mary. I remember being scared about the possibility of submarines on the way over. While in England I was on a 24-hour leave just before D-Day. I was separated from my group and was lost in downtown England. M.P.'s had to locate where I was to go and help me get back to my unit. If you were late you could be shot. I remember seeing the V-2 rockets attacking while I was in England. We landed in France shortly after D-Day. We had to sail on a large boat across the English Channel. When we got to the ship we had to climb down rope ladders on the ship. We arrived in a Higgins Boat. I did not see any dead bodies on the beach but I did see guns, helmets and debris still there. The very first action I saw was in France (but I was told that it was Germany). The men and I were fighting in the hedgerows. The first day my captain stuck his head around a hedgerow corner and was shot dead between the eyes. I was never involved in hand-to-hand combat, never ran out of ammunition, but I remember being worried about German soldiers speaking English and wearing U.S. uniforms. I fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The locals in France loved the Troops and gave us lots of hugs and kisses! We would spend days without sleep and I remember one time falling asleep while marching! We would spend weeks sometimes on the front lines. I spent 31 days on the front lines without a break. We ate rations on the front lines and sometimes we would get to take hot showers. Thanksgiving and Christmas were the only times that we would get hot meals. I would sometimes see guys run screaming, losing their cool. Shell shocked. One time while on patrol (I was carrying a B.A.R.) I was hiding in a bale of hay with many other Americans around. While waiting, 8 or 10 Germans were coming down the road, laughing and joking, when the Americans surprised and captured

them without shooting. Once I was demoted from Sargeant because my gun was dirty. Most of the fighting I did was in the cold and snow. While in Germany once I was in a foxhole outpost with others waiting for the Germans. We waited without a sound. We heard the Germans who were very quiet also. The Americans had code words, like a certain state, but there was no response, so the Americans fired. All night we heard the moans of the dying Germans. Finally they fell silent. The next day we found 5 or 6 dead Germans about 20 feet away. I was wounded in Germany while we were attacking the Germans. A buddy and I were using a bazooka (I was the shooter) trying to destroy tanks. When I fired, the tank fired simultaneously. The tank's shell exploded on a tree and the shrapnel hit me in the right hand. I had to march back from the front among bombs and guns and shells buzzing all around me. I was walking back when I saw in a foxhole a buddy who had been with me since I joined the Army. This guy was older than I was and he had taken me under his wing and watched out for me. Now he was lying in the foxhole dying. I remember his eyes looking at me for help. With bombs bursting all around, I could only walk over and past my dying friend. The medics wrapped my wounded hand, while still dirty, and sent me on my way. Later I found my arm seemed to be crawling. The medics would not let me remove the cast. I later found out that it was because there were maggots eating the dirt and dead tissue away from my wound. The maggots saved my hand from being removed. I flew home on a plane that was attacked several times. It had bullet holes in it. The AAA came from German held islands in the Channel. They sent me to a hospital in Alabama where my nurse would later become my wife, Marione, and we are still together today."



Byrl Rasnick

Byrl Rasnick, 82, of LaGrange, died Friday, October 8, 2004, at Hospice LaGrange.

Mr. Rasnick was born August 30, 1922, in Coeburn, Va. and was the son of the late William Abedrego and Nora Moore Rasnick. Prior to his retirement in 1981. Mr. Rasnick was the owner and operator of C&R Plumbing Company, East Point, Ga., and had served in the United States Army, 94th Infantry Division, and was wounded at the Battle of the Bulge Ardenn's Forest during World War II. Mr. Rasnick was a member of the VFW, American Legion, and St. Peter's Catholic Church.

Survivors include his wife of 58 years, Marione Brace Rasnick of LaGrange; one daughter, Marie R. Fetzer of Blue Ridge; four sons; David W. Rasnick of California, Robert J. Rasnick of Colorado; John D. Rasnick of Luthersville, Tom D. Rasnick of Warm Springs; two brothers, Billy Rasnick and Kenneth Carico; eight grandchildren with one on the way and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial mass will be held at 4 p.m. on Friday, October 22, 2004 at the St. Peters Catholic Church with the Rev. Selva Raj officiating.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Hospice LaGrange or to the VFW Post 4629.

Striffler-Hamby Mortuary, 1010 Mooty Bridge Road is in charge of the arrangements.



*Lakes - Dunson - Robertson
Funeral Home, Inc.*

201 Hamilton Street