

MY LIFE IN THE MILITARY
FROM JULY 12, 1943 TO MARCH 15, 1946

ON JULY 12, 1943 ANOTHER FRIEND OF MINE AND MYSELF WENT TO CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY TO TAKE OUR PHYSICAL AS WE WERE BOTH VOLUNTEERING TO ENTER THE ARMY THAT DAY. WELL BY EVENING WE WERE AT FORT DIX, NEW JERSEY HAVING BEEN SWORN IN LATE THAT AFTERNOON.

AFTER BEING PROCESSED AND TAKEN LOADS OF TESTS, I LEFT TO HEAD SOUTH AND I ENDED UP IN MIAMI BEACH TO TAKE MY BASIC TRAINING FOR THE NEXT 13 WEEKS. WHEN I FINISHED MY BASIC TRAINING I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE ARMY SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM CALLED ASTP(ALL SAFE TO PEACE)

FIRST I WAS SENT TO STETSON COLLEGE IN DELAND, FLORIDA AND THEN TO ROLLINS COLLEGE IN WINTER PARK, FLORIDA. AFTER A SHORT STAY WE WERE LOADED ON A TRAIN AND EVENTUALLY ARRIVED OUT IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA IN OCTOBER 1943. THE ONE NICE THING WAS THERE WERE 5000 NAVY WAVES TAKING TRAINING WHILE I WAS THERE.. IN MARCH OF 1944 OUR SPECIALIZED PROGRAM WAS CLOSED DOWN AND WE ALL WERE SENT TO THE 103 INFANTRY DIVISION AT CAMP HOWZE. I WAS ASSIGNED TO E COMPANY, 409TH INFANTRY REGIMENT AND FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS WE WERE GIVEN BASIC TRAINING AND SPECIALIZED TRAINING IN INFANTRY TACTICS.

IN SEPTEMBER 1944 WE LEFT CAMP HOWZE TEXAS FOR THE LAST TIME AND AFTER A LONG TRAIN RIDE UP THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THE U.S. AND INTO CANADA AND BACK AGAIN INTO NEW YORK STATE, WE STOPPED AT CAMP SHANKS ON THE HUDSON RIVER. AFTER BEING PROCESSED, E COMPANY 409TH INFANTRY WAS ASSIGNED AS TRANSPORT POLICE AND BOARDED THE OCEAN LINER MONTICELLO THAT HAD BEEN THE (COUNT GRANDI)(AN ITALIAN LINER) WE SAILED ON OCTOBER 5TH AND SAILED FOR 15 DAYS AND PASSED THROUGH THE GATES TO THE MEDITERRANERN SEA AND WE ARRIVED AT MARSEILLE ON OCTOBER 20TH. THE HARBOR STILL HAD SUNKEN SHIPS IN IT. AFTER DISEMBARKING AND WALKING ABOUT 20 MILES WE ARRIVED AT A BARREN PLAIN WHERE WE SET UP TENT CITY AND AWAITED FOR ALL OUR EQUIPMENT TO BE UNLOADED. THEN WHEN EVERYTHING WAS OK, THE DIVISION STARTED THE LONG DRIVE UP INTO FRANCE BY GOING THROUGH VALENCE, LYON, DIJON, AND EPINAL TO THE FOOT OF THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS. E COMPANY TOOK UP POSITIONS ALONG THE TAINTRUX RIVER. ON NOVEMBER 16TH THE DIVISION JUMPED OFF TO ATTACK HILL 2 IN THE

TAINTRUX AREA, THERE WAS ONE NATURAL OBSTACLE IN CROSSING THE VALLEY THAT MORNING. IT WAS THE TAINTRUX RIVER THE SECOND BATTALION S-2 SECTION INFORMED THE MEN THAT THE RIVER WAS ONLY TWO FEET DEEP BUT THE ATTACKERS FOUND IT TO BE FOUR FEET DEEP IN SOME AREA. SINCE I WAS THE RADIO OPERATOR FOR E COMPANY WHEN I HIT THE RIVER I LANDED IN A DEEP SPOT WELL OVER MY HEAD AND I USED THE RADIO AS A LIFE PRESERVER AS I SWAM ACROSS THE RIVER.

HILL 2 WAS A VERY TALL HILL THAT COMPANY E CAPTURED IN ABOUT TWO HOURS ONE NIGHT ON THAT MOUNTAIN WAS HELD THE GERMANS SHELLED MOST OF THE NIGHT AND I WAS DIGGING LIKE THE DEVIL TO GET DEEPER IN THE HOLE. THEN SGT SCOTT THE FIRST SGT JUMPS INTO MY HOLE AND SAYS DIG DEEPER. I TOLD HIM IF YOU STAY ON TOP YOU WILL PROTECT ME FROM THE SCHNATNEL. THE NEXT DAY WE CAME DOWN OFF THE MOUNTAIN AND MOVED THROUGH ST. DIE AND THE LUBINE PASS. AT THE LUBINE PASS WE HAD TO STOP AS THE GERMANS HAD THE ROAD VERY FORTIFIED. COL LLOYD WALKED UP SAYING THERE WERE NO GERMANS UP THERE AND WHEN HE GOT AROUND THE CORNER HE ALMOST GOT HIS REAR SHOT OFF.

ONCE WE HAD CROSSED INTO THE ALSACE PLAIN WE HELPED IN CAPTURING THE CITY OF SELESTAT ON THE RHINE. FROM THERE EASY COMPANY WENT NORTH AND ENTERED THE SIEGFRIED LINE AND GOT INTO TRENCHES AND OUR ADVANCE WAS BLOCKED BY HEAVILY FORTIFIED PILL BOXES. THEN WE WERE PULLED BACK FROM THE AREA AND MOVED WEST TO TAKE OVER THE DEFENSIVE AREA THE THIRD ARMY HAD BEEN HOLDING.

IT WAS THEN THAT I HAD DEVELOPED LOBAR PNEUMONIA AND WAS EVACUATED TO EPENAL FRANCE TO A GENERAL HOSPITAL TO TREAT MY PNEUMONIA AND MY FROST BITE FEET. ON JANUARY 25 I RETURNED TO MY COMPANY THAT NOW WAS HOLDING AN AREA IN THE MAGINOT LINE NEAR LUMBACK.

THE NEXT DAY ORDER CAME TO WITHDRAWAL FROM THIS POSITION AND WE WALKED ABOUT 25 MILES OVER VERY ICY ROADS UNTIL WE CAME TO THE NEW DEFENSIVE LINE. THERE WE SAT UNTIL MARCH 15 WHEN THE WHOLE 7TH ARMY ATTACKED. BY MARCH 20TH WE WERE ON THE EDGE OF THE SIEGFRIED LINE AGAIN. THEN OUT OF NOWHERE AN 88 SHELL EXPLODED AFTER HITTING A TREE BURST THAT KILLED CAPTAIN STEVENSON C.O OF E COMPANY AND SOME OTHER OFFICERS AND MEN, INCLUDING MYSELF. THAT ENDED MY DAYS OF COMBAT AND WHEN I RETURNED TO MY UNIT THEY WERE IN AUSTRIA AROUND HALL. WE WERE PERFORMING GUARD DUTY AROUND A BIG CAMP THAT HOUSED 5000 RUSSIANS. THEN IN JULY 1945 WE RETURNED TO GERMANY AND THE DIVISION WAS BROKEN UP. THE 103RD DIV BECAME A HIGH POINT WITH ALL MEN HAVING 85 POINTS OR MORE JOIN THE DIVISION AND SAILED HOME WITH THEM

A FEW OF US THAT WERE ORIGINAL 103 DIVISION MEN WERE ASSIGNED TO THE NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION AND WE SPENT A FEW NIGHTS AT DACHAU CONCETRATION CAMP IN THE FORMER S S BILLETTS. THEN WE LEFT AND WENT TO OUR ASSIGNMENTS WITH THE VARIOUS INFANTRY COMPANIES IN THE FIELD THE REMAINDER OF THE LOW POINT MEN OF THE 103RD DIV WERE SENT BACK TO THE STATES TO GET TRAINING BEFORE INVADING JAPAN. WELL THAT NEVER CAME OFF AND THESE FOLKS WERE IMMEDIATELY DISCHARGED FROM THE SERVICE

WELL I REMAINED IN OCCUPATION IN A SMALL VILLAGE NAME MT SHERAM AND LATER WE WERE MOVED BACK TO FIRSTENFEILDBROK THAT WAS NORTH WEST OF MUNICH AND TOOK UP DUTY OF RUNING ROAD BLOCKS AND GUARD DUTY AROUND A PRISON CAMP CONTAINING GERMAN TROOPS.

WHILE THERE I WAS GIVEN A 14 DAY LEAVE TO GO VACATION IN SWITZERLAND. FIRST TOOK A JEEP RIDE TO STASBOURG, FRANCE AND TRAIN TO SWITZERLAND PASING THROUGH SELESTATE ON THE WAY. SORT OF GAVE ME A STRANGE FEELING TO GO THROUGH A TOWN WE HAD ATTACKED A YEAR BEFORE. ONE ADVANTAGE OF THIS VACATION WAS I COULD MAKE A PHONE CALL BACK TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER IN CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY. EARLY IN FEBRUARY SOME OF US WERE TRANSFERRED TO AN ARTILLERY UNIT OF THE 71ST INFANTRY DIVISION AND WE BOARDED BOX CARS AND TRAVELED FOR THREE DAYS TILL WE CAME TO CAMP LUCKY STRIKE IN LE HARVE FRANCE, THEN ON MARCH 1ST 1946 I RECEIVED A GREAT 21ST BIRTHDAY AS WE WERE BOARDING A VICTORY SHIP CALLED THE HOOD VICTORY. WE SAILED LATE IN THE AFTERNOON AND SAW JUST A TIP OF GREAT BRITIAN THAT'S CALLED LANDS END. IT WAS A ENJOYABLE VOYAGE AND ARRIVED ON MARCH 10TH IN NEW YORK CITY AND TRAINED TO CAMP KILMER FOR PROCESSING ON MARCH 12 I WAS BUSED TO FORT DIX AND WENT TO THE SAME BARACKS I HAD BEEN IN THE FIRST DAY IN THE ARMY BACK IN 1943. ON MARCH 15TH I WAS SEFFERATED AFTER SIGNING ON TO REMAIN IN THE ORGANIZES RESERVE CORPS. I STAYED IN THE RESERVE TO MARCH 1, 1985 WHEN I RETIRED FROM THE ARMY AS A MAJOR.

SOMETIME IN TIE 1970 I WAS ON TWO WEEKS OF ACTIVE DUTY AT FORT LEE, VIRGINIA AND WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 103RD LOGISTICAL UNIT AND THEY HAD THE SAME SHOULDER PATCH OF THE OLD 103 INF DIV HAD, IT TURNED OUT I AM THE ONLY MAN THAT SERVED IN THE INFANTRY DIVISION AND LOGISTICAL UNIT AND HAD THE CACTUS PATCH ON BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT SHOULDER.

Q.E.D.

AMSBRY MITCHELL BROOKS JR.
MAJOR- A.U.S. -RETIRED

**ONLY PICTURE TAKEN OF ME IN COMBAT WITH E COMPANY 409 INF AS ITS
RADIO OPERATOR**



APPROXIMATELY 1945
REAR

LUCAS

FIRST OF ALL MY WIFE AND MYSELF WERE GOOD FRIENDS OF LEO CEFKIN.
IN 1988 LEO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN RUNNING THE REUNION FOR THE SECOND BN, 409TH INFANTRY
IN DENVER AND TAKING ALL OF US TO THE DOG RACES AT THE DEVNOR TRACK. I ALWAYS KIDDED
LEO ABOUT HIS POLITICS. HE WAS A DIED IN THE WOOL DEMOCRAT. I MISS HIM AS MY WIFE AND
MYSELF ENJOYED HIS COMPANTY
I WONDER WHAT HE WOULD THINK OF THE CANADATES ON THE DEMOCRAT TICKET THIS YEAR. HE
WOULD SUPPORT HILLARY AS HE HAS MET HER SEVERAL TIMES.
IF YOU HAVE A WRITE UP ON LEO. I WOULD LIKE TO READ IT.
WHO EVER IS RUNNING THE 103 DIRECTORY SHOULD BE RELIEVED OF HIS DUTY
MY ADDRESS IS 1008 BRANDON ROAD

BAY COLONY
VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
23451 3725
TELEPHONE NUMBERS IS 1-757-428-0633
MY E-MAIL IS ABTOGRAM@AOL.COM

I ENTERED THE SERVICE JULY 12, 1943 AND AFTER BEING PROCESSED AT FORT DIX WAS SENT TO
MIAMI BEACH, FLA FOR BASIC TRAINING I CAN QUITE REMEMBER THE DATE I WAS TRANSFERRED
TO STETSON COLLEGE BUT FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS I FROZE MY BUTT OFF AS THE
TEMPERATURE DROPPED INTO THE 30S AND WE DID NOT HAVE FIELD JACKETS. WHILE THERE I RAN
INTO A FELLOW THAT VACATION WITH HIS FAMILY EACH YEAR AT CAPE MAY, N.J. THEN IT WAS
OFF TO ROLLINS NEXT. I RAN INTO A GIRL WHO WAS A STUDENT AT ROLLINS AND SHE WAS
FROM N. J. BUT VACATIONED EVERY SUMMER IN CAPE MAY. THEN LIKE YOU
WE WERE LOADED ONTO A TRAIN AND ARRIVED IN STILLWATER ABOUT 4 A.M.
WE WERE HOUSED IN THE FOOTBALL STADIUM. TWO DAYS LATER I RAN INTO MY CLASS MATE
FROM CAPE MAY HIGH SCHOOL JOE POCHER. NEXT I FOUND OUT FROM MY FATHER THAT A GIRL
THAT LIVED TWO DOORS DOWN FROM MY HOME IN CAPE MAY WAS AN INSTRUCTOR IN HOME
ECONOMICS AT A. AND M. FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS I HAD A GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH HER
AND SHE TAUGHT ME ALOT ABOUT HOME LOVING. HA HA. ONE WEEKEND WHEN RETURNING
FROM TULSA A MAN STOPPED TO PICK ME AND AN ANOTHER PERSON IN HIS CAR. AFTER I HAD
BEEN IN THE CAR LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES ANOTHER G.I WAS UP FRONT AND IT TURNED OUT HE
WAS FROM CAPE MAY BUT A YEAR AHEAD OF ME IN HIGH SCHOOL. HAROLD MARKLEY. I ENDED UP
IN E-COMPANY 409TH INF 2ND PLATOON
BUT BILL BETCHER BECAME FIRST SCOUT AND I WAS SECOND SCOUT LATER I WAS MADE THE
COMPANY RADIO OPERATOR. WHEN WE BOARDED THE MONTICELO
TROOP SHIP WE WERE ASSIGN TO THE WEATHER DECK THAT WAS ENCLOSED AS OUR DUTY WAS
TO MAKE SURE THINGS WENT RIGHT. ANOTHER SMALL WORLD YEARS LATER AN ATTORNEY
HERE IN VA BEACH WAS ON ANOTHER TROOP SHIP
IN THE CONVEY. WE ALWAYS GOT TOGETHER OCT 5 TO HAVE A DRINK. HE WAS IN THE 100
DIVISION. OK I WILL SIGN OFF FOR NOW
BEST REGARDS. MITCH BROOKS



Mrs Gloria McLeod
7618 Twin Hill Drive
Houston TX 77071

Sept 3 2012

Dear Gloria!

Enclosed is my 2012
dues of \$25.00

The other thing I wanted
to tell you is that about 1960 to
1963 I was on active duty at
Fort Lee Va and as attached
to the 103d Sustainment Command
There C.O. came in and saw
that I had an 103 Div Patch
on each shoulder. He made a
comment about I have the wrong
patch on the right shoulder. I
said I served in E-Co-40th
in WWII and we are allowed
to wear the 103 Patch on the
right shoulder. He looked at my
and saluted me and said
thank you Major

By all means put our Div
Archives in the Army Fort Des Moines

C.C. Lucas & Martin

Sincerely

Mitch Brooks