



103d Infantry Division (Cactus) *Headquarters, 103d Infantry Division (Cactus)*



Lieutenant Colonel Alfred W. Croll



Lieutenant Colonel Alfred William Croll was born November 27, 1897 in Pennsylvania. His parents were of Dutch heritage. Alfred joined the Army in 1913 at the age of 16. He was less than honest about his age when he first joined during World War I, entering the service as a Private. There is no information available on Colonel Croll's service during WWI or the intervening years between WWI and the onset of WWII. However at some point, during this period, he re-enlisted using his correct date of birth. By this time, Colonel Croll had chosen to make the Army a career. He rose through the ranks to retire as a Lieutenant Colonel sometime in the early 50s.

Colonel Croll was assigned to the 103d Infantry Division (Cactus) as the Adjutant. He signed General Order 2, November 15, 1942 as Adjutant. At the time of his assignment, Alfred was a Major. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel at some date between January and April 1943 where he first signed a General Order as a Lieutenant Colonel. He served with the 103d Infantry Division (Cactus) as Adjutant during the initial training phase at Camp Claiborne, the advanced training at Camp Howze and subsequently into the European Theatre where he served the

entire duration of combat.

During the liberation of the Kaufering Camp, a sub-camp of Dachau, Colonel Croll took many pictures which he kept filed in a footlocker after his retirement, along with other items from his military career. According to his step-daughter, he would not show the pictures to her due to the horrific nature of the photos. She did not see the pictures until she had graduated from college and was an adult. She recalls that she saw a stack of what appeared to be skeletons, lying on top of each other in a courtyard. He told her that they were not skeletons but live humans. He only showed them to her once, but the images continue to haunt her even today. Unfortunately, the photos and much of his military memorabilia was discarded when Colonel Croll and his wife moved from Vermont to California.

Colonel Croll's step-daughter had a few items from his military service with the 103d Infantry Division. She passed on his personal side arm, a government issue 1911 .45 pistol, its holster, a box of ammunition for the pistol, and his Adjutant Field Case, to a very close friend who now cherishes these items. The items are shown here.

Lieutenant Colonel Croll passed away in California on January 22, 1977.

