



103d Infantry Division (Cactus) *Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion* *409th Infantry Regiment*



Major General William S. Sillery

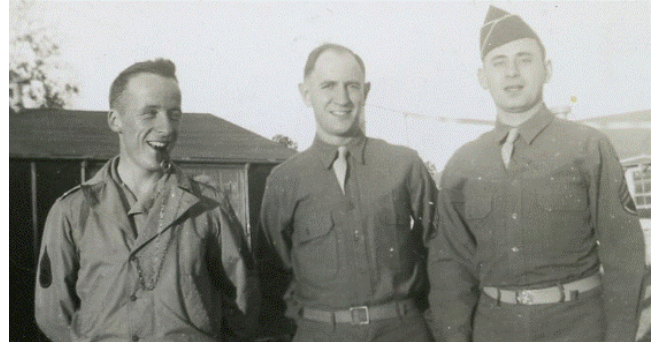


William S. Sillery was born in Rensselaer, New York January 18, 1918. He attended St. John's Academy in Rensselaer. After graduation General Sillery entered Siena College in Loudonville, New York, majoring in chemistry. Prior to his enlistment into the Army, the General worked as a chemist with the General Aniline and Film Corporation in Rensselaer.

Then Private Sillery entered the Army in Albany, New York on May 14, 1942. Ultimately, his career would take him through every rank from Private to Major General. Adding to this distinction, General Sillery served as commanding officer at the company, battalion, and regimental levels and also served in all staff positions at the division level, including Operations Officer and Chief of Staff.

After joining Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 409th Infantry Regiment in November, 1942, it took General Sillery less than two years to advance from Private to First Sergeant of Headquarters Company. On June 7, 1945, First Sergeant Sillery was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. In a rare instance, Second Lieutenant Sillery was assigned back to Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 409th Infantry Regiment on June 10, 1945. In August, 1945, he applied for and was accepted as a Regular Army officer.

First Sergeant Sillery (left) was awarded his first Bronze Star for Valor for heroism in battle for action that occurred on December 12, 1944 in the vicinity of Merkweiler, France. A motorized convoy was unknowingly directed during travel on a confusing network of roads and encountered heavy concentrations of enemy artillery fire. With complete disregard for his own life, First Sergeant Sillery dashed to the head of the convoy, ascertained the extent of the problem, and then directed the vehicles to cover. First Sergeant Sillery courageously exposed himself again to the intense artillery fire to locate the battalion command post. After orienting his proper route on the map, he rejoined his convoy and led them to their destination. As a result of his valorous actions, First Sergeant Sillery relieved the convoy from a perilous position without the loss of a vehicle.



After leaving Active Duty, General Sillery was assigned to the U. S. Army Reserve, where he served until his promotion to Major. In 1967, he left the U.S. Army Reserve and joined the New York Guard as a Lieutenant Colonel, where he commanded a battalion and later as a Colonel commanded regiment of the New York Guard. Ultimately he retired as a Major General. General Sillery was a graduate of the Infantry, Adjutant General & Military Intelligence Career Courses, Command & General Staff College and War College. In the picture to the right, Major General Sillery and wife Virginia prepare to attend his retirement ceremony.

After his World War II active military service, General Sillery returned to his position as a chemist with General Aniline and Film Corporation. Later he accepted a position with Nationwide Insurance and Manufacturer's Casualty



Company as a Claims Adjuster. In 1957 William Sillery was appointed Commissioner of Assessment and Taxation, serving for ten years. He was a General Manager for several real estate firms before becoming Chairman and Executive Director of the Rensselaer Housing Authority and Chairman of the Rensselaer City Planning Commission.

In his later years, General Sillery served as a Hearing Officer for Property Tax Grievances. He was also a past officer of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and was the New York State President for the Reserve Officer's Association. General Sillery was a former Commander of the Gerald O'Neil American Legion Post #168. He was also a member of the New York State Assessors Association, BPOE Rensselaer Lodge #2073, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Watervliet Arsenal Officer's Club and the Rensselaer Kiwanis Club.

General Sillery passed away November 24, 1999. He and Virginia were married for over 53 years and were proud parents of two children, William J. Sillery and daughter Natalie A. Sillery DiPonzio. General Sillery had two granddaughters, Elaine and Jaclyn Sillery,

General Sillery's decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle East Campaign Medal with Silver Battle Star, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Airborne Jump Wings.

