

Fredrick Smallwood

423/1st BN/HQ

106th Infantry Division

8/29/2008 - Thanks for the update. Sorry to hear about (Richard) Sparks. I had gotten his name several years ago from John Kline, and spent a day with him in FL where we compared notes. We determined that we must have been together at least part of the time he wrote about in his "A Walk In The Woods."

Do you have the email or mailing address for Johnny Johnson Jr.? He said he was in the ASTP at Vandervile and so was I. I was assigned to the A & P Platoon or 1 BN HQ Co of the 423 Regiment. On Dec. 18, 1944, several of us became lost in the dark on the march out from our position heading toward Schonberg. We did not reach Schoenberg and thus were not POWs. We wandered through the night and early on Dec. 19, we wandered into a town and joined up with a bunch of other GIs, whom we didn't know, just GIs. We stayed with them and began our effort to reach St. Vith and American lines. I was a Pfc and didn't know anything. We just tagged along until the line became broken several times and reunited later sometimes. I was in a group of 13 that reached American lines around 7am while Sparks said they reached the American lines around 2 am on Dec. 21. We stayed in St. Vith all day until the town was evacuated that night. Again 3 of us became separated from the others that we started out with and came out with. We hitched a ride with A Co. 424 Reg. as they drove by and attached ourselves to them. We expected them to report us 'safe' to Div. Hq., but they didn't thus, we were reported as MIA with telegrams being sent home. We were with "A" Co. when some others that we remembered coming out with were reassigned to "A" Co. I don't remember any names. Johnny may have been one of them. I do not remember anyone's names but I would love to reminisce with Johnny. I would appreciate any help you could give me. I am writing "My War", my story of my war experienced with no one to collaborate with as my buddies who came out with me are now dead. I have read all the books and have gleaned names, places, dates, etc. from them as "I was there too." It is almost finished but not proof read yet. When I print it I will send you a copy.

Fredrick Smallwood

I am Fredrick Smallwood, and I was a PFC in HQ CO 1 BN 423rd Inf., initially in the A & P Platoon. When we reached the front line on Dec. 13th, my squad's job was to guard the entrance to the Co. HQ, in a German Bunker. In the march, from our position on Dec. 18th toward Schonberg, the line became broken, in the dark, and a few of us became lost from the main force, who surrendered the next afternoon.

We staggered around in the dark until morning and I think we came out at Oberlascheid and joined up with Lt. Ike Long's Reg. I & R platoon, it was some more of the 106 men. We started walking out toward St. Vith. The line became separated several times and, on the morning of Dec. 21st, 13 of us were challenged by US troops, Combat BN B of the 7th Armored. We were taken into St. Vith and stayed with them all day. We evacuated town at 11 pm that night. The next day I and 2 buddies jumped on a convoy of vehicles of the 424th Reg. and stayed with them.

I never was taken prisoner but was one of the 300 or so that walked out and joined up with the 424th. When they reactivated the Division, we were used as cadre to reestablish the "lost" Regiments. I was made Asst. Mechanic in the same original Co. My buddy,

Bill Thaelke, had helped the Supply Sgt., in the preparations to go overseas and he was made Supply Sgt.

We remained together until Aug., 1945, after the Japanese surrender and the Div. was sent home. He remained with the Div. and got home. I was shipped out to another outfit, allowing men with more points to take our place and come home first. I got home and discharged on Jan. 23, 1946, my 21st birthday. I'm writing my memoirs and am trying to make it as inclusive, complete, and accurate as possible.

I never received my medals, so one day in the late 90's, I wrote the St. Louis depository but my records were one of those that burned. I sent them a copy of my discharge and they sent me my medals including the Bronze Star, which I knew nothing about. I heard or read somewhere that all of us, who were entitled to the Combat Infantry Badge, were retroactively given the Bronze Star. Can you verify that?



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