

Richard L. Rigatti

Company B, 423rd Regiment
106th Infantry Division

Ex-POW had soft spot for fellow veterans

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Monday, November 13, 2006

After his experiences as a prisoner of war during World War II, Richard L. Rigatti devoted himself to helping other veterans.

In 1999, then-Gov. Tom Ridge appointed him to the Pennsylvania Advisory Council for the Southwestern Veterans Center in Highland Park, one of six state-run veterans homes in Pennsylvania.



Richard L. Rigatti, of O'Hara, died Saturday, Nov. 11, 2006, at St. Margaret's Hospital in Aspinwall after a prolonged illness. He was 82.

"He was concerned about veterans who didn't have good financial means, equipment, medical care, places to live," said his daughter, Ursula "Patti" Cettin, 52, of Bluefield, Va.

Mr. Rigatti grew up in Lawrenceville and graduated from Central Catholic High School in Oakland. He served from March 18, 1943, to Nov. 27, 1945, with the [106th Infantry Division](#), [423rd Regiment](#), [Company B](#) in World War II.

A technical sergeant, he won a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for helping hold off the German advance during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. The battle, a turning point in the European theater, resulted in 100,000 German, 81,000 American and 1,400 British casualties.

"His company essentially fought until they ran out of ammunition and supplies," said his son, Mark, 46, of Atlanta.

Mr. Rigatti's unit surrendered, and he became a prisoner of war.

"As an infantryman in the Army, it was almost a disgrace for him to be captured," said his son Dick, 60, of Athens, Ga. "It was a struggle for him emotionally."

Mark Rigatti said his father was caught trying to escape three times and, deemed a troublemaker, was severely beaten.

Mr. Rigatti was forced to march around the German countryside until May 8, 1945, when he was liberated by British soldiers, who tossed cans of food to the hungry prisoners. Until his death, Mr. Rigatti kept the knife the British gave him to open those cans.

After the war, he earned a bachelor's degree in business from Duquesne University and later started Stat Holter International, a medical services company in Monroeville. He sold the company and retired in 2001 at age 77.

"He was a hard-working guy," Dick Rigatti said. "He wanted to put the gifts that God gave him to work."

Cettin said her father had high expectations of all his family. He ensured that all of his children went to college, and he relished lively conversations with them.

"I always enjoyed sitting and discussing politics with my Dad," she said. "My Dad wanted everyone to be educated and well-informed of their opinions."

Survivors include his wife of 62 years, Patricia; three sons, Michael Rigatti, of O'Hara, Dick Rigatti, of Athens, Ga., and Mark Rigatti, of Atlanta; two daughters, Mary Beth Kelly, of Robinson, and Ursula "Patti" Cettin, of Bluefield, Va.; and seven grandchildren.

Friends will be received from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. today at Weddell-Ajak Funeral Home in Aspinwall. A prayer service will be held at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday at the funeral home, followed at 10 a.m. by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Scholastica Church, Aspinwall.

Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery. The family asks that memorials be in the form of donations to the Southwestern Veterans Center, 7060 Highland Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.

Bill Zlatos, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review - Pittsburgh,PA,USA

Richard Rigatti, 423/B former Treasurer of The 106th Infantry Division Association died Saturday, November 11, 2006.

The viewing will be Monday, November 13 from 2-4 PM and 7-9 PM at the :

**Weddell-Ajak Funeral Home
100 Center Ave
Aspinwall, PA
(412) 781-1897
www.fsnfuneralhomes.com**

**The family has asked that instead of flowers, send donations in his name to:
Southwestern Veteran's Center
7060 Highland Blvd.**

Pittsburgh, PA. 15206

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