

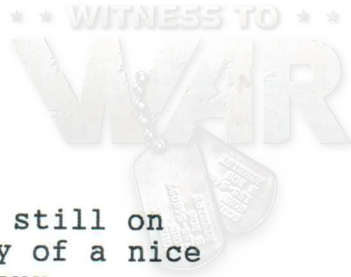


MY MILITARY CAREER

(SOME REMEMBRANCES OF SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II)

by William J. Newman

As recalled in September 1994



SKEETS KRUEGER

We moved out of Dusseldorf to little town close by but still on the Rhine. Our observation post was in the second story of a nice home. Things continued very quiet. In just a few days our lieutenant told us we were moving into the attack. The 106th Division, or what was left of it, was replacing us. My neighbor, Skeets Krueger was a squad sergeant in the 106th.

I grew up with Skeets. His family lived 2 houses from ours. Late in the Depression his family had to give up their home. They rented in another part of town, but I saw Skeets off and on.

We went into the Army at about the same time and corresponded occasionally. Just before going overseas, I wrote Skeets of my assignment to the 95th Infantry. He wrote back that he made squad sergeant in an infantry company in the 106th Infantry. Knowing how it got clobbered in the Battle of the Bulge, I did not have high hopes for Skeets.

Back on the Rhine we were in the process of moving out when a lieutenant from the 106th came up the stairs to check out our observation post. I said to him, "Sir, I know this is a crazy question, but a friend of mine is a sergeant in the 106th. Is it possible you ever ran across him? His name is Skeets Krueger." (There were 13,000 men in the Table of Organization for an infantry division, so this was like hoping to find one needle in a big haystack.

He smiled at me, walked over to the stairs and called down, "Hey, Skeets, there's a friend of yours up here. Come on up."

I went over to the stairs as Skeets came up. We both had stunned smiles on our faces. We hardly knew what to say. As children we played together every day. Now we had hit a rough patch.

We chatted a bit. Then I asked him how he had survived the German Tiger tanks and the furious German attack on the 106th. Skeets said, "Some of us made it just by the skin of our teeth. I and 10 of my men were dug in foxholes pretty much covered with snow. The Germans hit us completely by surprise. They came so fast that they charged by us without even seeing us. We waited a long time with our heads down in our holes to be sure there were no more coming. At night we tried to find other squads and officers to figure out what to do. We couldn't find any GI's. We started working our way back. A couple of times we ran into a few Germans, killed some and lost some of my squad. In a day or two we got to the American lines."

Skeets and I chatted for about 15 minutes. Then his lieutenant called up to him that they had to hit the road.

That was the last time I saw Skeets. The war ended. I heard later that his family had moved again while he was overseas. Through third parties I heard rumors that he got home OK, but I'm not positive.