



*103d Infantry Division (Cactus)*  
*Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion,*  
*409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment*



1LT Charles H. Flynn



1LT Charles H. Flynn, United States Army served with Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 103d Infantry Division

LT Charles Flynn's twin brother, Arthur M. Flynn, was assigned to Headquarters Company, Ammunition & Pioneer Platoon, 3d Battalion, 409th Infantry Regiment, 103d Infantry Division (Cactus). During their careers, Charles picked up the nickname, "Pillbox Flynn", while his brother was dubbed "Bridgehead Flynn."

The name "Pillbox Flynn" came during the Vosges Mountain campaign waged by the 103d Infantry Division from November 11 through December 17, 1944. As the Division fought its way through northeast France, it crossed the border and reached the famous Siegfried Line on the German side.

The Siegfried Line consisted of a series of huge, heavily fortified and reinforced concrete blockhouses connected together by a series of trenches. These concrete structures were referred to as pillboxes by American soldiers, each one approximately 300 yards apart and situated where the Germans could lay down covering fire from rifle and machine guns. Each of the pillboxes had two to four steel plated embrasures, or firing windows, on the outer walls.

Early December 17, 1944, Company A, 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment stood in awe as they gazed upon these heavily fortified positions. LT Charles Flynn, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Leader, received the daunting task of attacking the pillboxes in the Company A area of operation. There was no close air support from P-47s, no napalm, nor Molotov cocktails. The only thing available was a few "Beehive" explosive charges. A "Beehive" charge was typically a 5 pound, six inch in diameter low speed explosive that was designed to penetrate the side of houses, and could ruin the day of a tank crew if the charge could get placed close enough. As a shape charge, the design was such that it would make a nice hole in the side of

the pillbox while at the same time reducing the amount of blow back from the explosion. These would have to do for LT Charles Flynn and his men.

With supporting artillery and covering fire from his men, LT Flynn made his way toward the pillbox and climbed atop. The ironic thing here is the Beehive explosive that LT Charles Flynn was using was supplied by his twin brother, LT Arthur Flynn of the Ammunition & Pioneer Platoon. Carefully, LT Charles Flynn lowered the Beehive charge, ensuring it was placed against the embrasure. The Beehive charge did its job of blowing a large hole in the embrasure, but did not blow up the heavily fortified pillbox.

However, the charge was sufficient to cause four Wehrmacht officers to attempt an escape out the back door of the pillbox. They were immediately captured as enemy riflemen in adjacent trenches fled from the scene. Company A breached the Siegfried Line and from that point forward, LT Charles Flynn was known at Pillbox.

Charles H. Flynn passed away December 5, 2009.