



**Company B, 409th Infantry
Regiment, 103d Infantry
Division (Cactus)**



PFC Harry Nixon

Harry W. Nixon was born December 17, 1922 at San Antonio, Texas. He enlisted in the Army Enlisted Reserve Corps December 3, 1942 while attending St. Mary's University in San Antonio. On May 12, 1943, Harry was called to active duty.

He travel to Camp Maxey, Paris, Texas to attend Basic Training. After Basic he entered the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) at Texas A&I College in Kingsville, Texas. Upon the Army's discontinuing ASTP, in April 1944, PVT Harry Nixon was assigned to Company B, 409th Infantry Regiment, 103d Infantry Division (Cactus) at Camp Howze, Texas.

After completion of training at Camp Howze, Texas the 103d Infantry Division (Cactus) and its subordinate elements were ordered overseas via Camp Shanks, New York. PVT Nixon was now a Mortarman with Company B, 409th Infantry as the Regiment joined the 7th U.S. Army in October, 1944 just outside Marseille, France. The first action was near St. Die, France in the Vosges Mountains. PVT Nixon was part of the "lost company" that was captured at Selestat, France on December 2, 1944.

The first stop after capture was Stalag XII A, located in Limburg, Germany. The picture at the right is of the Americans right after they had liberated Stalag XII A in March, 1945. Unfortunately for PVT Nixon, he had been transferred to Stalag IV B in Muhlberg, Germany and placed on a lumber mill work detail in Glauchau, Germany. Thus he was not liberated until April 15, 1945. The following picture is of Stalag IV B.



At Stalag IV B, PVT Nixon was sent to work in a lumber mill which



manufactured fabricated houses for the bombed out cities of the Reich. In addition to working in the lumber mill, Nixon and his fellow POWs were in charge of planting potatoes, which they were able to hide some for use later to make potato soup. When he was liberated, Harry Nixon had hidden 50 pounds of potatoes in the event of an emergency.

Harry Nixon wrote:

"The war in Europe officially ended on

May 7, 1945 – My war ended three weeks earlier...

On April 15, I was liberated from a prisoner-of-war work detail at Glauchau, German, which is near Leipzig and Dresden. An almost five-month period of incarceration was over, as General Patton's Third Army liberated our town, and me, along with 19 other U.S. POWs.

My war had culminated when 79 members of our Company B, of the 103d Division's 409th Infantry Regiment, were captured in combat at Selestat, Alsace near the Rhine River, on December 2, 1944. I was injured in that action.

A three-day cattle car ride, and two German POW camps later, I arrived in Glauchau, where I worked at a home prefabrication factory and also on a farm.

After liberation, it was back by truck through the notorious Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald to Gotha, where a C-47 flew us, which was my first plane ride, to Le Havre, France and Camp Lucky Strike.

After a couple of weeks there, and a three day pass into Paris, I boarded a liberty ship and was transported to Boston. While I was in the mid-Atlantic, World War II in Europe officially came to an end.

A train trip to my home in San Antonio, and reunion with my mother and dad, was followed by a 60 day furlough and then return to Army life at Camp Swift Regional Hospital, near Bastrop.

Several months of treatment to rehabilitate an injured wrist received in combat concluded with my discharge from military service. After 2 ½ years, I was discharged on November 23, 1945.

As I look back 60 years, I occasionally re-live memories of the "old war" by perusing my Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Combat Infantryman's Badge.

When attending a performance at Steven Stoli's Playhouse, at intermission, I go next door to his World War II Memorial Museum, where he generously has placed some of my POW mementos on display.

I was but one of millions of young men, and women, who saw service in the war. We each had our own unique experiences and share memories six decades later of "our war."

PVT Nixon was promoted to PFC just prior to his discharge on November 23, 1945.

His awards and decorations include:

Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.