

Robert (Bob) D. Shields - Private to Staff Sergeant to Second Lieutenant

Served with distinction in the Hq1 Communications Platoon from February 1943 to November 1945.

On April 15, 1945, Bob Shields was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. Bob remained assigned to Hq1 as the Communications Platoon Leader until November 1945 when he returned to the United States for separation.

Bob Shields is a distinguished member and an outstanding example of the "Greatest of the Greatest Generation." He served courageously and successfully in the military during World War II, and subsequently enjoyed a lifetime career in law enforcement and public service.



Bob was born August 2, 1920 in Sparkville, New York. He enlisted in the Army November 25, 1941 and served in the Second (Horse) Cavalry at Fort Riley, Kansas. He left the cavalry to attend the Parachute School at Fort Benning, Georgia. After qualification as a parachutist and graduation from the Communications School, Bob was assigned to the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (508th PIR) at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.



At the time, the 508th PIR was a newly activated regiment. Camp Mackall had been carved out of the swamps of North Carolina and required a lot of additional work to make it suitable for troops.

The 508th PIR troops did the fatigue work of clearing debris and brush, turning muddy tracks into roads, and just plain old-fashioned pick and shovel labor. The supervising noncommissioned officers referred to it as "beautification of the area."

Notwithstanding the need for "fatigue" (labor) details, the regiment began advanced infantry and airborne operations training programs.

The advance infantry program included strenuous field exercises, crew-served weapons drills and firing, small unit and battalion exercises.

The airborne operations training program consisted of night parachute jumps, unit assembly exercises, and equipment preparation and bundle wrapping techniques for parachuting weapons, ammunitions, radios, wire, medical supplies and assorted equipment required for battlefield operations.

After several night parachute jumps and extended maneuvers, the regiment was ready for major field exercises and maneuvers. In May 1943, the regiment maneuvered against 101st Airborne Division troops in South Carolina. It now needed one large-scale field maneuver to qualify for overseas shipment.

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The chance to demonstrate its efficiency arrived in September 1943; the 508th PIR was selected to participate as the aggressor in the Tennessee maneuvers.

After several miserable weeks maneuvering as ground forces, the regiment made a successful night jump that proved its effectiveness, and the 508th PIR proud but tired returned to Camp Mackall.

In December 1943, the 508th PIR left New York and sailed to Belfast, Ireland. After a few weeks of orientations, weapons firing and small unit exercises, the regiment moved to Nottingham, England and prepared for combat somewhere in Europe.

Bob Shields participated in all of the 508th PIR's campaigns and battles that are described briefly in Chapter II, Combat Operation.

- ?? He parachuted into Normandy June 6, 1944.
- ?? He parachuted into Holland September 17, 1944.
- ?? He moved on December 18, 1944 with the 508th PIR to Werbomont, Belgium to blunt the German's last desperate attempt to save the Third Reich. The ensuing campaign was called the "Battle of the Bulge" the most difficult battle of WW II in Europe.
- ?? He served with Occupation forces in Germany, commanding security forces and honor guard formations supporting General Eisenhower's headquarters.

During his military career, Robert Shields transited from a youth to a seasoned combat leader. He performed courageously and heroically in a variety of important and decisive combat operations.

Bob Shields earned many awards and decorations while in the 508th PIR including:

- ?? Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster
- ?? Purple Heart Medal
- ?? Invasion Arrowhead
- ?? Combat Infantry Badge
- ?? Four Battle stars
- ?? Parachute Qualification badge with two stars for combat jumps (Normandy and Holland)
- ?? Presidential Unit Citation
- ?? French and Belgium Fourrageres
- ?? Orange Lanyard of the Royal Netherlands Army
- ?? Numerous defense medals - including the Occupation Medal with Germany Bar

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Bob Shields was separated from the Army in December 1945 at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The Army lost an exceptionally good officer.

Subsequently, Bob served a lifetime in critical law enforcement positions including as Sheriff's Deputies and as a weapons instructor.

Bob has received countless honors and awards attesting to his dedication and skill in law enforcement and public service. He also spent many active years as a pilot and Squadron Leader in the Civil Air Patrol and participating in and encouraging the sport of Sky Diving.



Bob and Barbara Shields



Deputy Sheriff Bob Shields

Robert and Barbara Shields reside at 25 Polhemus Street, Tappan, NY 10983-1722

This Album is Not For Sale

This excerpt from the "We Served Proudly, The Men of Hq1" album contains the recollections of men who in their youth risked their lives in furtherance of our national interests. These memoirs are sacred to them -- especially those events alluding to activities in which comrades lost their lives on the battlefields of Europe.

This album was prepared for perpetual residence in the archives of the Camp Blanding Museum complex, operated by the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc. Starke, Florida. We are grateful for the support and assistance of the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, and for their kindness in having the museum make our album available to historians, students, researchers and others interested in our background and brief history.

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Copies of the album have been presented to the Hq1 veterans or their survivors that contributed information for the effort. To facilitate reproducing copies of individual memoirs for relatives or friends, the memoirs have been developed as separate entities.

October 19, 2004

George S. Stokel

Hq1 Album Collator