

# William B. Goudy - Private to Sergeant

Served with distinction in the Hq1 81mm Mortar Platoon from October 20, 1942 to January 22, 1945 when he was critically wounded by German Artillery fire and evacuated, ending his military career.

Bill was an outstanding soldier and competent leader. He performed effectively as a Mortar Squad leader, Section leader, and as a forward observer, the latter replacing officer observer casualties.

Bill Goudy's noteworthy military career and subsequent civilian accomplishments identify him as a distinguished member of the "Greatest of the Greatest Generation."



Consistent with his habitual modesty and brevity, Bill Goudy contributed a brief story for this album. Bill said: "I had better get this done while I can, as my eyesight is going pretty fast." Accordingly, Bill recalls only his first six days in Normandy.

"I got out of my chute under machinegun fire and crawled over to another trooper and helped him get out of his chute. A few minutes later we located fifteen paratroopers including an officer. At daybreak, as we started to move we discovered that we were in the middle of a deployed German artillery unit.

As we quietly moved out of the area, we discovered that a German patrol was following closely behind us. We deployed behind a hedgerow and organized a hasty defensive position. The Germans also deployed and a vigorous firefight ensued.

As we were obviously outnumbered, the officer leading our group told me - as the only noncommissioned officer (Corporal). 'Go around the end of the hedgerow, and fire on the Germans from the flank.' I picked one man and we worked our way around the hedgerow to a position where we could shoot at the Germans, a big mistake. In the initial exchange of fire, my partner (a red head named Mansfield) was killed and I was pinned down by rifle and machinegun fire.

As soon as I could, I worked my way free and returned to where I had left our group only to discover they had pulled out and left me.

I scurried out of the area and spent the night in a hedgerow. Just before daylight I discovered a German unit was deploying on the other side of my hedgerow. Again, I quickly vacated that unwelcome area. A short time later I wandered into a large field that looked like it had been an impact area for large artillery shells.

I found an area where the shells had detonated among a group of paratroopers. Among the dead, I found Harry Higgins' body, it was stripped of his jump jacket and still had a white mark where he had worn a wristwatch.

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I spent the next four days and nights moving cautiously up and down lanes and roads, hiding in hedgerows, and avoiding large German units and motorized patrols. Finally, on D-Day plus 6, days, I found the 508<sup>th</sup> PIR. I lay down and slept all day.”

In August 1944, Bill Goudy was promoted to Section Leader in the 81mm Mortar Platoon and he commanded two mortar squads.

On September 17, 1944, Bill led his section on the jump into Holland and into the city of Nijmegen. That night Bill’s section supported the assault troops trying to capture the highway bridge over the Waal River.

Early on September 18, the battalion was ordered to break contact with the Germans in Nijmegen, and return to the drop zone. During the night, German infantry with antiaircraft guns had occupied the drop zone.

This German force was capable of destroying the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division glider-borne forces (three artillery battalions, engineer equipment and ammunition) scheduled to land in the area, around noon.

Bill Goudy's mortar section supported the battalion’s attacking rifle companies as they rapidly cleared the drop zone of Germans, killing or capturing them, and destroying the antiaircraft guns. The gliders landed safely, and countless American lives were saved.

**In December 1944, in Vielsalm, Belgium the two mortar platoon officer forward observers were wounded and evacuated. Thereafter, Bill Goudy served as both a Section leader and as a forward observer.**

Bill performed courageously, employing mortar and artillery fires to support 508<sup>th</sup> PIR operations, through the densely forested Ardennes, and Siegfried Line fortifications.

Disaster struck the Hq1 mortar platoon 22 January 1945. The platoon came under direct German artillery fire. Bill Goudy and Glenn Sommerville (section leaders) were severely wounded and evacuated. Bill with a serious head wound and Glenn lost an eye and arm. Steve Tetak was killed. Steve was an outstanding soldier and a popular member of the mortar platoon

During his dedicated service in the 508<sup>th</sup> PIR, William Goudy earned:

- ?? Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals
- ?? Combat Infantry Badge
- ?? Parachutist Qualification Badge with two stars for combat jumps (Normandy and Holland)
- ?? Invasion Arrowhead
- ?? Four battle stars
- ?? Presidential Unit Citation

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- ?? French & Belgium Fourrageres
- ?? Orange Lanyard of the Royal Netherlands Army
- ?? Numerous defense medals including the WW II Victory medal



Bill and Mabel Goudy

(Bill is making an offer that Mabel obviously cannot refuse!)

Bill and Mabel Goudy reside at 410 Bukey Avenue, Williamstown, West Virginia, 26187-1312 - where they happily raised three daughters. They also have several grandchildren.

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## This Album is Not For Sale

**T**his 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 arch-ives 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.

No reproduction or distribution restrictions are imposed or implied for the album or pages thereof -- providing such actions are not undertaken for profit.

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 . Stock~~**

**Hq1 Album Collator**