

Charles H Kister



World War II Mt Wolf Veteran

Charles was born on March 3, 1925 in Goldsboro, Pa. He attended a two-room schoolhouse and worked on the family farm in the Goldsboro area. At age 16, he began work at the New York Wire Cloth Company in Mt Wolf, continuing until he entered the US Army at age 18 in May 1943.

Trained as a Rifleman, he shipped out of San Francisco to the Japanese front in December 1943 aboard a troop transport ship. Arriving in Australia, Charles was assigned to the 41st Division 186th Infantry Medical Detachment. He had no prior medical training.

On April 22, 1944 the 186th Infantry participated in the American amphibious landing operation on Hollandia, a town on the northern coast of New Guinea on Humboldt Bay, a major Japanese air base. The next landing was on May 27, 1944 at Biak, a coral reef island near the northern coast of Papua. There was no drinking water, and troops faced dense jungle providing cover for lots of Japanese who were firmly secured in natural limestone caves and fortifications. For two of the several weeks the battle continued, the US soldiers had only half a canteen of water per day, dried rations and no change of clothes. After Biak, Charles participated in campaigns in the following areas of the Philippines: Palawan Island, Mindoro, Mindanao, and Zamboanga.

After the Japanese surrendered, he was transported to occupied Japan on October 7, 1945, and stayed 3 miles from the flash point of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. The walls of the warehouse he stayed in were distorted from the bomb's blast. He was shipped out of Japan to San Diego, California on December 25, 1945. Charles was a front line litter bearer during the war, which involved rescuing and recovering US casualties plus assisting doctors treating the troops. Pay for this duty in the Second World War was \$57.50 per month.

He was discharged from the Army on January 11, 1946 with the rank T/5. He received the Good Conduct Metal, Philippine Liberations Ribbon with one Bronze Star, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Metal with two Bronze Stars and one Bronze Arrowhead, World War II Victory Metal, and a Bronze Star Metal.

After his discharge, he traveled by train to New Cumberland where he met his future wife Jean Reeser for the first time. They had been corresponding during most of his Army duty. He also caught up to an unusual piece of mail that he had mailed home from the Philippines – a coconut. The coconut is still in the family with the address hand written directly on the shell.

He returned to work at the New York Wire Cloth Company in Mt Wolf. He and his wife moved to 142 North Second Street, Mt Wolf in June, 1948. They moved to 250 N. Third Street, Mt. Wolf in April, 1958 and continue to live there. Charles and his wife have 4 children, Brenda Holder, Douglas Kister, Beccy Charles, and Pamela Kister, plus 8 grand children and 17 great grand children.

He worked for Goodling Electric Company (which later became ExxonMobil) from 1950 until he retired in 1983 as a Heating & Refrigeration Technician. His hobbies have included wood working, gardening, fishing, camping, traveling, counted cross stitching, but most of all being a Great Family Man.