

DECEMBER 7, 2006 COMMEMORATION OF PEACE

REMEMBERING USC UPSTATE FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO SERVED IN WWII



NAME: Joseph Allen Cotten
DATE OF BIRTH: Sept. 13, 1917
HOME TOWN: Rives, Tenn.
BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army
MILITARY RANK: 1st Lieutenant
TYPE OF SERVICE: Tank commander
LOCATION: France
DATES OF SERVICE: 1941-1944

Joellen Harris (School of Education) writes ...
 "...My father, Joseph Cotten, was killed in WWII. His bronze star and purple heart are proudly displayed in our home. He is buried in St. Avold cemetery, the cemetery that was used in the movie "Saving Private Ryan." I have all of my father's letters he wrote to my mother prior to my birth. I was born in July of 1944 and he died in Sept. 1944. My only tie to my father is his letters...

...The letters have recently taken on a deeper meaning for me. I was recently asked to speak to a book club about my father when he was in the war. I knew I had these letters, but prior to this time I was too emotional to really read any of them. I still have not read them all as I have about 150 of them, a real treasure. The S.C. Historical Society asked me to donate them, but I have not made the decision to part with them just yet...

...My name is an combination of my father's Joe + Allen. Mama did not know if he was alive or dead for six months after his death. So for the first six months of my life I was Barbara Cotten. Then Mama changed my name to honor my father."

NAME: Millard Barton Ulmer
DATE OF BIRTH: Feb. 12, 1922
HOMETOWN: Demopolis, Ala.
BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army
MILITARY RANK: 1st Lieutenant
TYPE OF SERVICE: Liaison pilot
LOCATION OF SERVICE: Fort Sill, Okla. (Also Ala., S.C., La., Kan., Fla.)
DATES OF SERVICE: 1941-1946

MB Ulmer (Mathematics and Computer Science) writes... "Dad spent most of his service as a test pilot and trainer in the States. He also flew the famous Piper Cub in all competitions that pitted the Cub against the products of other companies who wanted aircraft contracts with the Army Air Corps. His commanding officer, Tony Piper, had a hand in keeping Dad in Ft. Sill. Dad invented a unique piece of equipment that allowed the Cub to carry weight into and out of tiny airstrips - important because helicopters weren't powerful enough in those days to take off from many such fields. Dad died in 1977."



NAME: Alfred Vernon Caldwell
DATE OF BIRTH: Nov. 2, 1924
HOMETOWN: Woodruff, S.C.
BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army
MILITARY RANK: PFC
TYPE OF SERVICE: Combat Engineer
LOCATION OF SERVICE: England, France, Germany, Austria
DATES OF SERVICE: 1943-1946

Lewanna Ulmer's Dad is still living in the area, but dementia has taken its toll on his memory. Lewanna transcribed some of his stories several years ago. Most of his memories were of the Normandy Invasion and fighting in France and Germany where he carried the bazooka (invented by my uncle GB Chiltoskey, who also produced 3-D maps of Normandy for the Army's planning of the invasion). He writes...

"We were in a coal mining town. We stayed there pretty close to a week. It was cold. Man, it was cold! I met this family. The man told me, "You come back here and sleep tonight." I said, "I don't know." He showed me a room and said, "You sleep here." I decided well maybe I would come back and sleep there. It would beat a pup tent all to pieces. He gave me a key when I started to leave. I had to leave his house and go directly on guard duty. When I got back that night, I didn't feel too good about sticking that key in that door and going in. All of them had gone to bed. I went on in there to the room. They had a fire in the stove. It was nice and warm, feather bed. I had already told him what time to wake me up the next morning. He did. I got up, got dressed, and took off. I never did see them anymore, because we left shortly after that." The man was German and spoke good English. They were nice friendly people. There wasn't any meanness in them."



NAME: David Lombard Harris
DATE OF BIRTH: 1915
HOMETOWN: San Francisco, Calif.
BRANCH OF SERVICE: Navy
MILITARY RANK: Captain
LOCATION OF SERVICE: Pacific
DATES OF SERVICE: 1936-1966

Claire Sachse (Univ. Comm.) writes... "My granddaddy had many stories to tell about his Navy career, but the story of how he and my grandmother married is so memorable. On the eve of their wedding in Coronado, Calif., the Navy telegraphed, ordering him to Hawaii. There was no time for a big wedding, but undaunted, my grandmother followed him in a steamship a month later, and the two were married in a beautiful Hawaiian church. I still have the telegram my grandmother saved as well as the Red Cross memorabilia from her service in Hawaii during the war."

