

ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veterans are Charles and William Craft, sons of Charles and Rebecca(Grammer) Craft and brothers of Bob Craft.

Charles Oliver Craft

Charles survived a very serious bout of Scarlet Fever in April of 1922 and went on not only to graduate from Assumption High School in 1928 but to play varsity baseball while in high school.

In February 1930, he enlisted in the Regular Army and was sent to Chicago, entering the Radio Department. After first serving in the Quartermasters Department then transferring to the Coast Artillery, he was assigned to the Headquarters Company, 61st Regiment, Coast Artillery, Regular Army.

While traveling in a government supply truck as part of a military detachment sent from Fort Sheridan, Illinois to Camp Custer, Michigan for a staff maneuver exercise with the 6th Corps, Charles was tragically killed in a truck-train collision on May 6, 1932.

Following the accident the Army shipped his body to the Shafer-Pitzer & Stauter Funeral Home in Assumption. The funeral wake was held in the family's home and the services were conducted on May 10th at the Presbyterian Church in Assumption, where Charles was a member. He was honored with a fly-over by three Army Air Corps biplanes from Chanute Airbase at Rantoul, Illinois. A military funeral was conducted by the American Legion with internment in Greenwood cemetery in Assumption.

William Craft

Bill attended Assumption High School and was a member of the football team when they won the 1932 Meridian Conference Championship.

Bill enlisted in the Army on May 23, 1934, serving until May 22, 1937. When World War Two started, he reenlisted and served from January 3, 1942, to September 19, 1945. He began his second enlistment stationed at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, arriving on station by November 1942. His unit was shipped to England, arriving on November 18, 1944. He served in Company C of the 13th Infantry in the U.S. Army during World War II in the European Theatre of Operation and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a Staff Sergeant in command of a patrol that was surrounded by German Infantry. While holed up in the basement of a house, he and his men fought off the German forces. As a result of the action he was awarded the Silver Star for combat gallantry and the Purple Heart.

His citation read:

"Staff Sergeant William L. Craft 6829859 Infantry Co. C 13th Infantry Regiment, for gallantry in action on 5 April 1945 in vicinity of Siegen, Germany. While occupying a building on the left flank of the company Sergeant Craft's squad was subjected to repeated German attacks both day and night. On one occasion a large attacking force succeeded in reaching Sergeant Craft's position. Without thought for his personal safety, Sgt. Craft left the building to personally engage the enemy, killing two Germans and forcing the remainder to withdraw. His gallant courage and aggressive leadership were an inspiration to all the men of his squad."

Before the war's end, he saw duty in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland and Germany. In addition to the Silver Star and Purple Heart, he earned two Bronze Stars for service in the Rhineland - Central Europe and was entitled to wear the Good

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Conduct medal. Bill was home on leave when the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. He was discharged from the U.S. Army on September 19, 1945.

According to his wife Ann, "He was a good soldier and did his job like he did every job in his life." She once asked him "Don't you get terribly tired?" and his answer was "Yes, and that is when I work harder to get that disagreeable job done and over with." That is the way he fought battles in Germany, "Let's get this done and over with."

For several years in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he owned and operated the Craft's Café in Assumption. Bill retired from the Job Corps as a food service manager in 1977, and he and Ann moved to Idaho where they homesteaded and farmed in the southern part of the state. Later they relocated to Hamilton, Montana, making it their home.

He passed away at the Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital in Hamilton, Ravalli County, Montana, on November 26, 1995, and was laid to rest with Military Honors in the Riverview Cemetery, just outside Hamilton, Montana.

Thank you Charles Craft and Staff Sergeant William Craft for what you gave for us. A big thanks to Jim Craft for sharing these articles about his father and uncles with us.