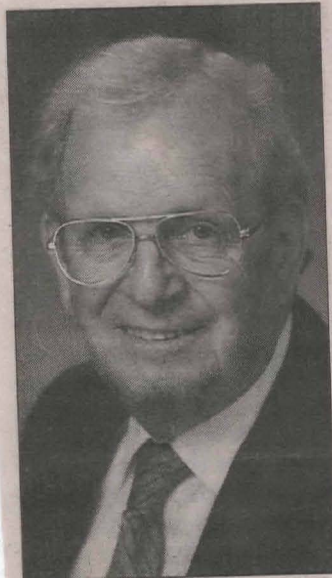


OBITUARIES | NC



Milton Rogerson Sr.
Milton Rogerson Sr.

Feb. 4, 1925 — April 14, 2009

Milton Harold Rogerson Sr. of Wilson passed away Tuesday evening, April 14, 2009, at Wake Medical Center. He was born in Washington on Feb. 4, 1925, son of Elmer Rogerson and Josephine Burgess Rogerson. He graduated from Washington High School and attended East Carolina Teachers College (East Carolina University).

He served in the United States Army with the 17th Airborne Division during World War II and was awarded the Bronze Star. He retired from Atlantic Christian College (now

Barton College) in 1990 after 29 years of service as director of publications. Prior to his tenure at Atlantic Christian College, he served as managing editor of the Sun Journal Newspaper in New Bern from 1957-61. He previously served as staff writer for the Washington Daily News. He was a member and past president of the University Photographers Association of America. He received recognition for professional photography on a state and national basis. He was a member of First Christian Church of Wilson since 1981 and served several terms as deacon. He also attended Bible Missionary Baptist Church of Wilson.

He was preceded in death by his wife Melrose Wilson Rogerson. Mr. Rogerson is survived by a son, M. Harold Rogerson Jr. and his wife Mickey Rogerson of Hillsborough; daughter, Teresa R. Thomas of Wilson; granddaughter, Brooke R. Beede and husband Ryan of Chapel Hill; grandson Adam B. Thomas of Wilson; and great-granddaughter, Lily Grey Beede of Chapel Hill.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 18, 2009, at First Christian Church of Wilson. The family will receive friends in the church parlor immediately following the service. Interment service will be at the Oakdale Cemetery in Washington at 4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Milton H. Rogerson Endowed Fund at Barton College, P.O. Box 5000, Wilson, N.C., 27893.

04/20/02

Berry Day -

Put Tides with Tide

History we already have

Thanks!

J

August 2006

Milton H. Rogerson
808 Lee St. North
Wilson, N.C

It's difficult to speak of my relatively short time in service without mentioning some things that played an important role in my military career.

The day I graduated from Washington (N.C.) High School in 1943, I received my induction notice for the military. I was not surprised, but was amused at the timing of the local draft board. (Nice graduation present.)

I knew it was imminent that I would enter military service because of my age. I really had no apprehension or regrets. I had a duty to serve my country. Two years earlier I had thoughts about going into the military and considered some factors that might affect my future. I never became serious about any of the girls I knew because I felt it would impair my ability to survive. I had heard that those who had concerns about girlfriends or wives stood less chance of surviving. This made sense to me. I also considered joining the best military unit for which I could qualify, one that would provide superior training and had a good performance record. There was little doubt from the very beginning that I should become a paratrooper despite the high casualty record. I believed they were the "best of the best." I do not think my parents were too happy for my choice but they always supported me. My instincts were correct as far as I am concerned even to this day.

Two weeks following graduation I was at Fort Bragg for a physical examination and shortly afterwards I was inducted into service. There were some additional requirements in the airborne physical and aptitude tests so it took a few days longer. I was soon sent to Camp Toccoa, Ga. for basic parachute infantry training.

While leaving the troop train that took me to Toccoa, a sergeant yelled at me to hurry. I was loaded down with my belongings but managed to reach the ground. He said, "Give me 10 pushups for being so slow." I did the pushups and got to my feet. It had been raining and the front of my body was covered with sticky red clay. The noncom had been engaged in conversation with someone else while I was on the ground. When I finished he turned around and said, "Did you do 10 pushups like I told you — you didn't cheat?" No, I didn't cheat." "Give me 10 more for not cheating when you had a chance." I learned quickly that basic parachute training could be a "Catch 22."

This was my introduction to parachute infantry training. Also it was the beginning of long marches, double-timing and just down right hard physical work. It was an introduction to a long period of both physical and mental conditioning. At times I felt they were trying to make me quit. I did not realize it at the time but they were preparing me to survive the harsh realities of days to come.

While there I learned that I was qualified to train as a pilot in the Army Air Corps. Against my better judgment I signed up and was sent to March Field in California, then to Buckley Field near Denver. It was there I learned 10,000 candidates were turned out of the Army Air Corps for what I understood was lack of aircraft and training facilities. I wasn't too disappointed because I really liked the parachute infantry.

I had hoped to return to my outfit but learned it had moved to another area and never did locate them. I did however ask to be sent to another parachute outfit. I was sent to a regular infantry regiment for a month or so to complete my basic training. It was there I learned that the officers, noncoms and regular soldiers were not of the superior quality I had seen in the parachute units. I finished basic training and was sent to The Parachute School at Ft. Benning, Ga. Because of my parachute basic training I was in excellent

physical condition and I completed the school in a breeze and received my paratrooper wings and certificate as a qualified parachutist in 1944. This was just the beginning

My group was sent to the port of embarkation at Ft. Mead, Md. However there was a change in our orders and we were instead sent to a small parachute training battalion at Camp Mackall, N.C. I later learned all parachute units trained together no less than a year before they were committed to combat.

Camp Mackall is located on the western end of the Ft. Bragg military reservation near Pinehurst. I learned my combat division, the 17th Airborne, had been founded there. Most of our training there dealt with communications, demolitions and parachute infantry tactics. I made no less than a couple dozen parachute jumps there. I really lost count. I believe if a person is properly trained, parachuting is easy. Jumping became a piece of cake, but not all the time. At first we jumped carrying basic gear, like a pack, rifle, etc., however we were later loaded down with other things like machine gun or 60mm mortar tubes, other related components, ammunition and the like. It seemed as though it rained every Monday morning when we left for the training area. Given a choice, it was a general consensus we had rather jump at the area rather than walk. Today I would guess one just had to be young to think in this manner.

One good thing about being stationed at Camp Mackall it was relatively close to my home and I could easily make a round trip over the weekend. Too, I could purchase cigarettes at a very low cost by the carton and carry them home to my father and friends

Following the Camp Mackall training we were shipped out. Those who lived on the east coast went to Europe as replacements and those from the west coast went to the South Pacific. Thus, I went to Europe. We went to New York where during the night we boarded the ship, Ile de France. I looked forward the passing by the Statue of Liberty in the morning. When I went up to the deck at the morning I saw nothing but open sea. They said our ship was too fast for a convoy and our odds of surviving were better alone — zigzagging. It took about eight days to cross because of the tactics involved. We arrived in Scotland in late afternoon and spent the night on a troop train en route to London.

To the best of my memory we were in London for only a few days and then on to France. I did see the Isle of Wight from a distance.

The history books tell of the exploits of the 17th Airborne Division to which I was sent. The division was activated in April of 1943 at Camp Mackall, N.C. I was in Company C the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The division participated in three major campaigns: The Battle of the Budge, the Rhineland and the Central Europe. Operation Varsity, as part of the Rhineland Campaign, was probably the most notable. The 17th Airborne troopers crossed the Rhine River in gliders, C-46 and C-47 transports. World War II casualties for the division was about 1,400 killed in action and literally thousands were wounded. I didn't get a scratch. I was no hero — just a trooper doing his best, however I am proud to have served along beside lots of real heroes. Those guys were good troopers and really knew their stuff. Among the thousands of awards and decorations earned were four Medals of Honor earned by troopers of the division.

After the war in Europe was over a group of us, along with a large number of troopers from other airborne divisions were sent to a marshalling area at Camp Victret near Marseilles, France. We thought we were going home. We were issued new winter uniforms. A few days later we exchanged them for summer uniforms and were told we were being sent to the Pacific Theater of Operations. We were headed for Japan. We were scheduled to go through the Panama Canal. Meantime it was announced over the ship's loudspeaker system that atomic bombs had been dropped on Japan. In the next day or so we were told the war in the Pacific was over. The Japanese had surrendered. Our ship soon turned about 90 degrees to the starboard and was headed for the United States. I learned many years later we were to be in on the initial invasion of Japan. A scary thought even today. .

I did not have enough points for discharge at that time so I was sent back to The Parachute School at Ft. Benning, Ga. I was initially assigned to serve as an instructor in D

Stage where new troopers were making their first parachute jumps. I quickly learned we had to make a jump every Friday. I felt I had made enough parachute jumps. I had friends at the school's headquarters thus I landed a desk job and served there until discharged. I never made a parachute jump again.

In retrospect it had been a great experience. My mother commented to a friend that I had gone into service at 18 years of age and came out 35 years old. She was alluding to the fact that I had learned discipline and had become a responsible person.

MILTON H. ROGERSON
808 LEE STREET NORTH
WILSON, N.C. 27893

August 18, 2006

Mr. John Hackney
John Hackney Insurance Agency
P.O. Box 998
Wilson, N.C. 27893

Dear John,


Thank you for your patience in waiting for my WWII military information that I promised long ago. I had been gathering some information for my grandchildren and finally finished it.

The enclosed information is what I prepared for them. Hopefully you can scan through it and pick out what you need. I intentionally left out battle details because they are in the past and best forgotten.

Should there be any other information you wish just give me a call at 237.0341.

I hope you and yours are well. Good luck with your historical effort.

Best regards,


Milton

252.237.0341

Milton Rogerson
808 Lee Street N.
Wilson, NC 27893
USA

Helmond, December 17th, 2007

Dear mister Rogerson,

I got your name and address from Mr. Ed Siergiej and hope you think it's ok that I'm writing you. Please let me introduce myself. My name is Erwin Flohr and I am 38 years old. Earlier this year I adopted a grave of a 17th Airborne soldier who is buried in Margraten. This to show my respect an gratitude to the people who helped free my country. The grave I adopted is the grave of S SGT John R. Thomas of the 17th Airborne Division, C Company, 513 Parachute Infantry Regiment. When I knew whose grave it was I really wanted to find out more about him. In my search I already found the brother of John Thomas, Mr. Clifford Thomas in New York. I called him and write him regularly and send him pictures. Because of medical problems he hasn't been able to respond so much and I am really hoping that there are other people who knew John Thomas as a friend or as someone who served with him.

In my search I already contacted well known people like Ed Siergiej, Bill Tom and Kirk Ross and they are more than willing to help me. Maybe there are some people still alive who might have known him in person. Also if he is on a picture so that I can see what he looked like. Any info would be great. From Ed Siergiej I heard that you might be able to help me as you were in company C or related to someone who was.

What I already know about John R. Thomas:

Name: John R. Thomas

Rank: S Sgt

Registration number: 42121196

Unit: C Company, 513 Parachute Infantry 17th Airborne Division

He was in the Battle of the Bulge.

He was killed in action on March 24rd 1945 in the jump over the Rhine, Operation Varsity

He was from the state of New York, Chenango County

Another reason for this information next to my personal interest is that there will be memorial at the cemetery in Margraten. The goal is to provide visitors with as much information as possible on the soldiers who are buried there. A picture of each soldier in uniform and as much personal and military information is therefore needed. It's my duty to provide the information on John R. Thomas. So there is still some work to do for me.

I hope you can get me forward in my search for information and hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you and best regards,



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The 17th Airborne in Germany

