



SGT CHESTER M. BURGER
U.S. Army
World War II

Chester M. Burger entered the U.S. Army at the age of 17 and like so many others at that time went through boot camp and trained for his tour of duty during World War II. He trained further with the Rangers in Italy and Africa. By the time he was 18 years old he had been captured and became a Prisoner Of War in Italy. During captivity he was held at Stalag 7-A, Camp 483-C and in Buchenwald. He was then forced to make a continual march from December 24, 1944 until May 3, 1945 by the German Army. Hitler had given the order for these POW's to be killed at a mass firing squad but the commanding officer of the march refused to carry out the order and marched the soldiers for almost a year to keep them from being rescued by the Russians. Finally, shortly after Burger turned 19, the American Paratroopers came in and took over the POW compound where he was being held at the time. Sgt. Burger's ordeal is reported in a chapter about his captivity in a book entitled "In Harm's Way" by Paul K. Cashdollar.

While in the Army Sgt Burger never received the citations or medals he deserved. After he left the Army he didn't apply for them either. Instead the medals were applied for by his daughter, Darlene Taylor. In addition to the two Purple Hearts and a Rifleman's Badge he received at discharge, Burger was found to be eligible for eight other medals. His daughter, with the help of the Veterans Administration, applied for the other medals he had earned. At the age of 92 years old Sgt Chester "Chet" Burger was awarded these medals by U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly at the Representative's office in Sharon. Among the medals were the Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, the Prisoner of War Medal and several others. As former President Bill Clinton said in paying homage to the World War II Veterans during a ceremony at Normandy Beach ".....when they were young, they saved the world....."

Sgt Chester M. Burger came home and in 1948 married one of his high school classmates, Rose. Together they raised two daughters and a son. Rose is now deceased. Burger is a resident of Hermitage, PA.