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Tuesday and Saturday
10 to 4 pm.

(library@mhgswichita.org)

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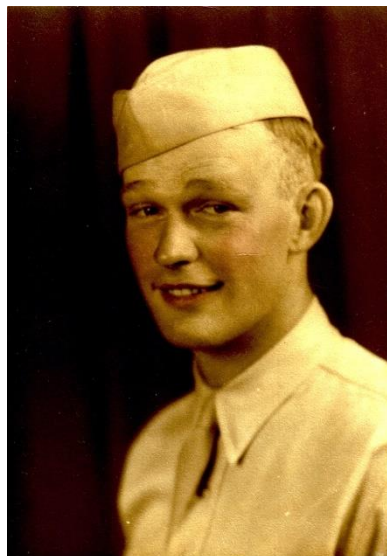
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ARMY MEDALS DELAYED 77 YEARS

Many years ago, back in Alexandria, Virginia, high school sweethearts Margaret Mae "Pat" Campbell (my mother) and Charles Ashby Jennings were married on 20 September 1940. They had to elope to Harrisonburg and lie about their ages to get married; he was barely 20 and she was just 17. At the time, both bride and groom had to be 21. Then World War II happened. Charles enlisted in the Army on 10 May 1943 and was sent to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for basic training. Pat was working for the Red Cross at the time but quit her job so she could follow him to Mississippi where she rented a small house in Hattiesburg.



At Camp Shelby, Charles rose rapidly through the ranks to Staff Sergeant and was sent overseas to the European Theater in the Spring of 1944. Serving in the 8th Division, 28th Infantry Regiment, Company D, he was wounded in the thigh by an artillery shell fragment on 24 February 1945 as his unit was involved in the very difficult crossing of the Roer River.



Charles spent two weeks in the 76th General Hospital near Liege, Belgium before rejoining his unit on 9 March 1945. On 30 March 1945 Charles was KIA somewhere near Köln, Germany. According to a letter from the chaplain, Charles was killed in an ambush by a wounded German officer. Germany surrendered about six weeks later, on 7 May 1945.

Time passed, Pat remarried and had three children: that marriage ended in divorce in 1972. As the family history researcher, I requested Charles' service records on Pat's behalf from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri about 20 years ago, but of course his records had been destroyed in the 1973 fire. The only document we received was the War Department's Report of Death, which had a handwritten notation on it about a Bronze Star.

Due to the chaos immediately following the war, Pat never received any of the medals Charles had earned in the service of this country. Contacting the Army about the medals, we were told Pat was not eligible to receive them because she had remarried. She had been divorced for 30 years by then, but that was irrelevant.

Pat is now 99 years old and living in a memory care facility, but she still recognizes people she sees regularly, and she remembers Charles. Earlier this year someone suggested contacting our U.S. Senator to see if he could help get Charles' medals for Pat, so I sent a letter to Senator Moran's office. Chelsey Ladd with the Senator's office in Hays, Kansas worked with her Army liaison, and just before Labor Day 2022 I received a box with six medals in it, as well as Pat's Gold Star pin.

I called the local VFW chapter and met with Robert, Gale, Phillip, and Chris a few days later. They were eager to help with presenting the medals to Pat and were surprised at how long the medals had been delayed.

On 24 September 2022, Pat finally received those medals in a special presentation by members of Wichita Memorial VFW Post 3115.



The medals Charles had been awarded were:

- Army Good Conduct Medal
- World War II Victory Medal
- European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two Bronze Service Stars
- Combat Infantryman Badge First Award
- Purple Heart with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster
- Bronze Star Medal (awarded for Charles' heroic efforts during the Roer River crossing on 24 February 1945)

When the time comes, Pat will be buried with Charles in Arlington National Cemetery, and his medals will be passed on to one of Charles's nieces. Until then, we will look at old pictures and the medals and talk about Charles whenever Mom wants.

Ann Hathaway Boll

NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY COLLECTION

Kansas Opera Houses: Actors & Community Events 1855-1925	R-210 288
Rooted in Dust: Surviving Drought & Depression in SW Kansas	R-210 282
Kansas Newman College: Educating the Mind, Inspiring the Spirit	R-210 SG 287
Our Day Family 1597-1990	G-D 086
Record of Massachusetts Volunteers 1861-1865	Online
Marriage Affidavits & Certificates: Harrison Co, Indiana 1809-1865	R-190 230
Records of Harrison Co, Indiana	R-190 231
A Collection of Harrison Co., Indiana Records	R-190 232
School Enumeration: Harrison Co., Indiana 1846 and 1847	R-190 233
75 Years of KIOGA Leadership	R-210 171
Midian Townsite, Butler Co, KS: Results of Phase 111	R-210 BU 27
Being Wichita Women	R-210 SG 285
Break Meade Area Cemeteries Series	R-220 240 V1
Break Meade Area Cemeteries Series	R-220 240 V2
Break Meade Area Cemeteries Series	R-220 240 V3
Project Beauty Collection	VF Project Beauty
St Anne's Catholic Church 50 Years of History	R-210 SG 290

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Library open Tuesday & Saturday 10 – 4 Email library@mhgswichita.org

Please see the Google calendar or our Facebook page for details.

GENEALOGY ROUNDTABLE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP	DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
Second Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Julia Langel	Fourth Tuesday @ 1:30 pm Led by Twila Ackley Brown
PHOTO MYSTERIES	
Third Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Rex Riley	

Midwest Historical and Genealogical Society

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Change Service Requested