



**Thomas
Hannan**

Army

Thomas Hannan

Mar 6, 1920 - Jun 13, 2008

BIRTHPLACE: Brockton, MA

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: PFC

**DIVISION: Army, Company K, 394th Infantry
Regiment, 99th Infantry Division**

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Mar 8, 1944 - Nov 29, 1945

**HONORED BY: The children of PFC Hannan -
Thomas, Patricia and Susan**

PRISONER OF WAR

BIOGRAPHY

While on patrol on December 18, 1944, PFC Thomas Hannan was captured by the Germans. The Germans took his unit of about 15 men and marched them to a prison camp (without their boots). They were loaded onto boxcars and taken to Stalag 13 in Hammelburg, Germany. Hannan was assigned to a 'work commando' and taken to the forest near Burgsinn where he and about 50 other soldiers cut down trees for the 'cause' under armed guard. They were housed in the unheated attic of a farmhouse and given only two meals a day (mostly root soup, bread and water). Each night the guards would take their boots and pants to keep them from escaping. Throughout their time at the work camp, the soldiers were becoming weaker and sicker. Tom's weight dropped from 165 lbs. to under 100 lbs. On April 1, 1945, the German soldiers ordered them on a forced march to get back to another prison camp. The German guards were ordered to get the GIs to a new prison camp and then return to the front since the Allied forces were advancing. To delay their reporting to the front, the guards zigzagged through towns instead of going directly. For 17 days they marched them. Tom became very ill and weak, and by April 14 he couldn't see. Other American prisoners carried him for three days. Finally on April 18th, American troops arrived in the town where they were sleeping and liberated them. Tom was rushed to a field hospital. Suffering from Diphtheria, he had emergency surgery to remove the membrane covering his throat. The doctors said he would not have survived 12 more hours without treatment. He was evacuated to four more hospitals until he was returned to Cushing General Hospital in Framingham, Massachusetts. By the time he arrived, he was completely paralyzed. He remained there for seven and a half months recovering from diphtheria and paralysis. He was honorably discharged at the hospital on November 19, 1945. Thomas Hannan passed away at the age of 88 in 2008, surrounded by his loving family. In the end, he stated to all of us, 'I've had a

great life!