



**Charles
Hamm**

Army

Charles Hamm

Jul 15, 1923 -

BIRTHPLACE: Phoenix, Arizona

SOLDIER DETAILS

DIVISION: Army, 502nd Parachute

SERVED: Oct 5, 1943 - Apr 23, 1946

HONORED BY: Wife, Barbara Hamm

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1924. In February, 1943, I received my draft notice. At the time, I was working after school and weekends in a small factory which had converted from making civilian goods to war essential products. I was asked to take a six-month deferment while I trained a woman to do my job. When I finally was inducted in October 1943, I was assigned to the Army Specialized Training Program, which meant that I would take basic Infantry training and then be assigned to Cornell University to continue engineering school to become an Army Engineer. The ATSP program for engineering students was discontinued and since I had infantry training completed, I was assigned to the 343 Inf. Reg, 86th 'Blackhawk' division at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. Here I was acting squad leader and shot expert with the 60 mm Mortar. I volunteered to become a paratrooper and graduated from Jump School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. After another 5-week course in Parachute Maintenance, I was sent to France, where I was issued an M-1 Rifle, a steel helmet, a 60 mm Mortar, hand grenades, and ammunition that started my combat experience. A highlight of my time served was when we were told to prepare ourselves for a 'spit and polish' review by the Top Brass. On March 15, 1945, we awaited the arrival of Ike and his party. With Eisenhower in the first Jeep was our beloved General Maxwell Taylor. Then came Lt. Gen. Beretan, CG of the First Allied Airborne Army, Major General Ridgeway and Stephan Early, President Roosevelt's Secretary. After reviewing the troops, Ike addressed us. Ike told us that we, the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne had become a fitting symbol on which the United Nations, all the citizens of the United Nations, can say to their soldiers today, 'we are proud of you' as it is my great privilege to say to you man to man to the 101st Division with all its attached units, I am awfully proud of you. To me, a boy soldier, this was a turning point in my becoming a 'man in a soldier's uniform.'