



**Bill
Herrick**
Army

Bill Herrick

Aug 21, 1918 - Jun 7, 1995

BIRTHPLACE: Emporia, KS

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Staff Sgt.

**DIVISION: Army, 1st Army, 3rd Armored Division,
36th Armored Infantry Regiment**

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Nov 5, 1941 -

BATTLE: Battle of the Bulge

**MILITARY HONORS: 2 purple hearts, 2 bronze
stars,**

**HONORED BY: son Gail and granddaughter
Michelle Herrick**

BIOGRAPHY

Bill Lee Herrick was born in Emporia, KS, the second of four children. Carl and Zola Herrick raised their children on a farm and Herrick worked hard but had a happy upbringing. Bill and his brothers enjoyed working with the livestock and were avid horsemen. They also enjoyed hunting, fishing and their motorcycles, big Indian 80's. Herrick was inducted in the Army in November of 1941 and on December 7, 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Herrick's album states, "we're in the fight now." Herrick started basic training at Fort Leavenworth, KS and in mid December was transferred to Camp Polk for more training. In June 1942 he went to Rice, CA for desert training then on to Indian Gap PA for yet more training. Herrick was teaching his unit Jujitsu (Judo) and missed the D-Day landings but landed on Omaha Beach D-Day+4. Bill's brother John was killed on D-Day while landing on Omaha Beach. Bill received 2 purple hearts and 2 bronze medals. In July of 1944 Bill was shot in the back of the head with an 8 MM Mauser round. He was transported to England where he was hospitalized for seven weeks. He was deaf and blind for a couple of weeks but gradually regained both senses. From the hospital he was sent to a replacement center and was not cleared for combat so he went AWOL, crossed the channel and worked his way toward the front to rejoin his unit outside of Stolberg Germany. The unit encountered intense fighting from Langerwche to take Geich, Obergeich and Echtzhauen. They received a unit citation for this action. Herrick's unit was the first troop in Cologne, and helped hold the line along the Rhine River during the Battle of the Bulge. The 3rd armored Division, first to cross into Germany, first to take a town on German soil, and first to cross the Siegfried

Line. Herrick received his 2nd bronze star while on night patrol. Night patrols normally were not designed for combat but to slip in and back out unnoticed to gain information about the enemy. On this night, Herrick's unit could hear activity ahead of them. Herrick crawled up to the edge of an ancient road that eroded 10 - 12 feet deep. He peeked over and columns of Germans were moving out as a result of fast moving push forward by the allied troops. At that moment, a German ran up the bank, placing a bipod mounted machine gun right in front of him. Herrick was carrying a sub-Thompson with him and open up fire along with releasing several grenades into the roadway. He then made a quick retreat until the machine fire started, then he crawled all the way back to his squad. The Germans were firing off green flares to illuminate the area but Herrick and all of his unit made it to cover with no one getting hurt. The next morning fourteen Germans were found dead from the interaction. This story was told to Herrick's son by a close friend, John Sanders who was in Herrick's unit. One thing about the war, Herrick shared with his son, Gail, which was most important to Herrick. He was chosen to drive General Dwight D. Eisenhower and another general, believed to be Omar Bradley, around in a jeep for a couple of days. Gail believes this occurred near the end of war. It made quite an impact on Herrick. More quotes can be found in the attached documents. Herrick returned to Kansas but the cold climate was hard on him, he thought that was from the frost bite he suffered during the Battle of the Bulge. Herrick moved to Arizona for the remainder of his life.