

GEORGE BILBREY: ONE FINAL BRIDGE TO CROSS

b. 1 May 1915 – d. 11 December 1944

‘Nobly He Fell While Fighting For Liberty’

Buried: Welch Memorial Cemetery, Monterey, Putnam Co., TN

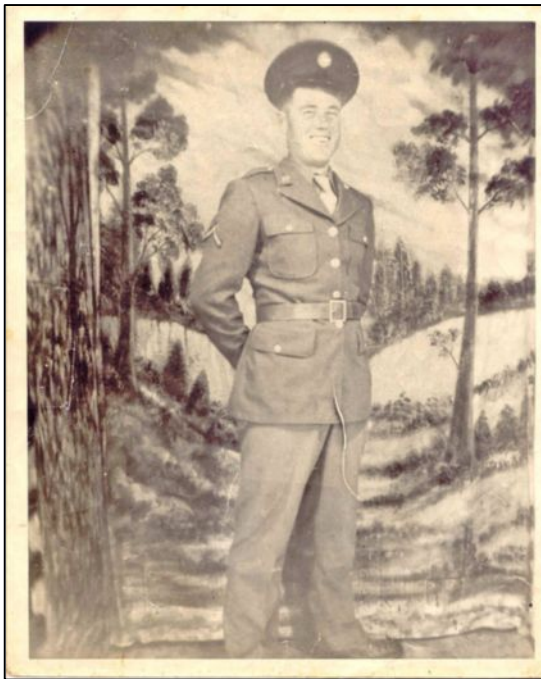
Father: Erasmus Bilbrey (1876-1969)

Mother: Naomi Artema Phillips (1877-1968)

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 25 May 2015

By Dale Welch

Pvt. George Bilbrey (Btry A 752nd F. A. BN) was one of 11 children born to Rev. Erasmus and Artemia Naomi Phillips Bilbrey on May 1, 1915. He was raised up, helping his family on the farm, in the Ninth District of Overton County.



At the outbreak of World War II, George had gotten in two years of high school. Family members say he had moved to Putnam County before the war.

On one cold morning, Jan. 12, 1943, at 5-ft., 10-in., weighing 162-lb., George enlisted in the U.S. Army at Camp Forrest, Tenn. After a short time of training, it was off to foreign shores.

Private Bilbrey was assigned to the 752nd Field Artillery Battalion and found himself in France. A few other local men like David Bowman of Rickman were in the same unit.

On Dec. 9, 1944, the 752nd Battalion moved into Silzheim, France. By Dec. 11, they moved in three more miles to Sarreinsming,

France, requiring an engineer bridge crossing over the Sarr River to get into Germany. The bridge was under fire from the German Army, which was trying to take it out to prevent the Americans from crossing into Germany.

The gun manned by Pvt. Bilbrey and others was in place, awaiting another gun crew to set up, when a short round from the enemy hit their position. The round instantly killed T/4 Bobby Hulsey; and seriously injured Pvt. Bilbrey, Lt. Engeler, PFC. Evans and Capt. Quest. Bilbrey and Evans died of their wounds, but Capt. Quest survived and was evacuated. On Dec. 14, Americans finally successfully crossed into Germany.

Shortly after the war, Pvt. George Bilbrey's body arrived by train at the Monterey Depot. He is at rest in the Welch Memorial, along with several of those 33 men who are listed on the Monterey VFW Post 6277 Memorial Wall.

