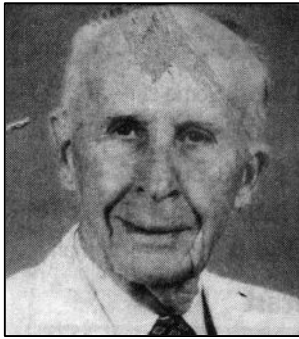


RAY LEFTWICH OBT.

LEFTWICH, RAY – Age 92, Sunday, May 13, 2007 at his residence in Carthage, TN.



Reared in the Enigma Community, former resident of Donelson. Retired from Veterans Affairs Administration, Nashville, TN in 1972 and moved to Carthage, and served as Country Veterans Affairs Officer until June, 2005. Survived by his wife of 64 years, Mary Lancaster Leftwich of Carthage, TN; son, John W. Leftwich, Sr. of Carthage, TN; daughter and son-in-law, Mary Ruth and Roger Lewis of Carthage, TN; three grandchildren, John W. Leftwich, Jr. of Cookeville, TN, Abby (Tim) Shivers of Dixon Springs, TN and Mary Elizabeth “Besty” (Matt) Pierucki of Lebanon, TN; four great-grandchildren, Taylor

Shivers, Emily Shivers, Emma Pierucki and Meg Pierucki; two brothers, Bill Leftwich of Jackson, TN and Charles Leftwich of Nashville, TN. Funeral services for Mr. Leftwich will be held at the Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Homes on Tuesday, May 15, 2007 at 1 p.m. conducted by his Pastor, Rev. Jerry Wallace. Interment with Military Honors at Gordonsville Cemetery. Active Pallbearers: nephews, Honorary Pallbearers: Carthage Rotary Club and U. S. Military Veterans he served. Memorials may be made to the Smith County Historical Public Library. Bass Funeral Home, 615-735-1212.

The Tennessean newspaper, Tuesday, 15 May 2007.

Note: Mary Lancaster, d/o James Peyton Lancaster & Alta Tonie Jared, d/o Christopher Columbus Jared & Montecello Lemiza “Sis” “Montie” Braswell. Christopher Columbus Jared, s/o John Jared & Anna Carr/Kerr, d/o Henry M. Carr & Naomi Jared. John Jared, s/o William Jared (Rev’l War) & Elizabeth Raulston.



RAY LEFTWICH
62 Years Service to His Country and
Fellow Veterans

Photo taken at
Smith County Heritage Museum
Smith Co., TN
October 2007

Mary (Lancaster) Leftwich Obt.

Age 89 of Carthage and previously of Donelson, died Tuesday, September 25, 2007 at home. Mary was born April 28, 1918 in Lancaster, TN, **the last child of the late Altie Jared Lancaster and James P. Lancaster.** Eight siblings preceded her in death, Leslie, Ed, Carl and Wirt Lancaster, Vera Reynolds, Edith Rose, Madge Moss and Bobbye Cooksey. Graduated from Gordonsville High School in 1936. Married to Ray Leftwich on April 22, 1943 and he preceded her in death on May 13, 2007.



A dedicated wife, loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She was active in church activities in Donelson and Carthage. Mary was passionate about family and genealogy. **She was instrumental in the establishment of the Caney Fork Chapter of the D. A. R.** Survivors include her son, John W. Leftwich, Sr. of Carthage, TN; daughter and son-in-law, Mary Ruth and Roger Lewis of Carthage, TN; three grandchildren, John W. Leftwich, Jr. of Cookeville, TN, Abby (Tim) Shivers of Dixon Springs, TN and Mary Elizabeth "Besty" (Matt) Pierucki of Lebanon, TN; four great-grandchildren, Taylor Shivers, Emily Shivers, Emma Pierucki and Meg Pierucki. Funeral services for Mrs. Leftwich will be held at the Carthage Chapel of Bass Funeral Homes on Thursday, September 27, 2007 at 2 p.m., conducted by her Pastor, Rev. Jerry Wallace. **Interment Gordonsville Cemetery.** Active Pallbearers; nephews. Memorials may be made to Golden Cross Fund, McKendree Village Foundation, 4343 Lebanon Rd., Tower Apt. 202, Hermitage, TN 37076. Visitation Wednesday, 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and one hour prior to service on Thursday. BASS FUNERAL HOME, (615) 735-1212; bassfh.com.

WWII EXPERIENCES OF 1ST LT. RAY LEFTWICH

By James L. Fletcher

Carthage Courier, Smith Co., TN: 1995

Ray Leftwich has been the Veterans Affairs Officer for Smith County since 1 July 1974. Prior to moving back to Carthage, Mr. Leftwich was with the Federal Veterans Administration in Nashville. He retired from civil service after 32 years. His knowledge of what makes the VA tick and the proper channels and procedures to follow has been of great benefit to veterans and their families in obtaining pensions and compensations to which they were entitled.



First Lt. Leftwich hasn't spent all his life behind a desk in an air conditioned building. He volunteered for military service in Cookeville on 24 February 1941, pursuant to the presidential order of 14 January 1941, which in part required all draft age men to get one year of military training and then return back to civilian life. Ray was 25 years old and a school teacher.

Lt. Leftwich said, "I volunteered along with several other young men in the area, Letron Petty, George Wilson Fields, Erwin Stout, Robert Hughes and others, to keep from being drafted. My first assignment was with the National Guard Cavalry Unit at Cookeville. Major Hubert Crawford was Commander and 2nd Lt. Bill Terry was one of the officers. After one week, we were federalized into the U. S. Army, 181st Field Artillery, and went to Camp Forest, Tennessee. The camp was under construction at that time and my older brother Fred was working there. We were training with 75 mm. artillery pieces that were of the World War I type. During our training at Camp Forest, we went on maneuvers in the Bell Buckle area of Tennessee. We also went to Louisiana and North Carolina on

maneuvers. During this time promotions came rather fast for me. In a few months I had been promoted to SSgt. and went to Ft. Benning, Georgia, for three months of automotive maintenance school. After graduation, I was sent to Camp Hood, Texas, to a tank destroyer unit. We were equipped with M-10 Tank Destroyers Bn.. These were open turret vehicles on a Sherman tank chassis, mounted with a three-inch naval gun. After a few months, I went to Tank Destroyer OCS and after three months came out a 90 day wonder and was assigned to a Tank Destroyer. Soon after I received my commission as 2nd Lt. I came home on furlough. While on furlough, Mary Lancaster and I were married on April 22, 1943 in the Methodist Church Parsonage by Rev. Henry Adkins. My wife and I returned to Camp Hood by train and got an apartment at Betson, Texas. We were in the same apartment building with Letron Petty and his wife, Ardelia, from Chestnut Mound. I served at Camp Hood and Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, until April 1944. With my state side duty over, I was shipped overseas as a replacement officer. This gave me a funny feeling. I know that I was going to replace a dead or wounded man. We left Norfolk, Virginia on 22 April 1944 on the USS Colin P. Kelly. The convoy was so large that I could see ships in all directions. We were at sea for 30 days and nothing unusual happened. We arrived in Naples, Italy, in May 1944. While waiting for assignment at the Replacement Depot outside of Naples, I met up with David Thompson from Chestnut Mound.

He had just received a letter from his mother and she told him that Mary and I had a son, John, born on June 22, 1944. A letter and telegram from Mary telling me about John had gotten delayed. I also saw Wilbur Maggart from Maggart while we were waiting for unit assignment. I was assigned to the 804th Tank Destroyer Bn. as a Combat Tank Destroyer Platoon Commander. My unit was made up of four M-10's, one half track for security patrol, one jeep and 30 plus men. We were never assigned to nay one division, but were sent to support the unit(s) that needed us the most. Our primary job was to knock out German tanks, and that we did. We knocked out one of the large German Tigers and several smaller ones. We were also used as fire support for the infantry to knock out machine gun nests, gun implacements and to help out the artillery laying down barrages. I'll say now that our three-inch guns had an ear splitting report like a keen clap of thunder and a range of three miles. During the winter of 1944-45, we were at a standstill in the mountains north of Rome and Florence. There was lots of snow waist deep which eventually melted and turned to mud. Movement was very slow. We spent most of the time in an artillery duel with the Germans. They would throw in one shell and we would throw back a dozen or more. In the spring of 1945, we broke out and crossed the Po Valley and went as far as the Swiss and Austria border when the war ended. I returned to Naples for a ship home. I boarded the USS Wakefield with 10,000 men and equipment and was on my to the Pacific by way of the USA. I was not looking forward to fighting the Japs after finishing with the Germans. While in the middle of the Atlantic we got word that the atomic bomb had been dropped and a little later that Japan had surrendered. I arrived back in the USA on 22 August 1945, at Boston Harbor. I will never forget the welcome we received when our ship pulled into the harbor. All the whistles and horns were blowing on land and sea. From Boston I was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, and received my discharge on 23 November 1945. I came to Carthage on the bus and on that bus was 1st Lt. Bill (Buffalo Bill) Terry from Cookeville that I had started out with in 1941. Needless to say, I was glad to be home and see Mary and my son John who was then 16 months old. For a time, we lived with out folks. I was working with the VA and doing house wiring as an extra job with my old buddy Letron Petty. We moved to Donelson and bought a house in June 1946, and lived there until we moved back to Carthage in July 1974."

Ray has attended two reunions of the 804th in Rosewell, New Mexico

Battle and Campaigns: Rome Arno, Po Valley, North Apennines.

Awards and Decorations: EAME Ribbon with three battle stars, American Defense Ribbon.

*See Carl Lancaster Obt. & Chapter 9 at:

<http://www.ajlambert.com>