

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Proudly Honors



WILLIAM CLARK LYNN
UNITED STATES ARMY
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (E-1)
1943 – 1944



as

PURPLE HEART PATRIOT
JANUARY 2025

Honoring his service and Sacrifice

Sponsored by: Olde Towne Fenton Chapter, NSDAR



William "Bill" Clark Lynn was born on September 15, 1923, to Theodore Fred Lynn and Reader May Fields Lynn. His mother passed away three days after his birth due to complications stemming from a weakened heart caused by the Spanish Flu epidemic. His father, unable to care for an infant, entrusted Bill to be raised by his wife's sister and her husband. When Bill was 10 years old, his father passed away.

Bill pursued a career as a plumber and was a dedicated member of the Masonic Lodge and a Shriner. He was well-liked and had many friends. A devoted husband, a great father, and a loving grandfather to his eight grandchildren, Bill was known for his willingness to do anything for his family and his wonderful sense of humor. Bill passed away on October 26, 1991, surrounded by family. He is deeply loved and greatly missed.



*William Clark,
age 3 years.*

He left Camp Grant, Chicago, Illinois, in June 1943 and was sent to Camp Wheeler, Georgia, for Basic Training for seventeen weeks. He was assigned to the Replacement Depot at Fort Meade, Maryland, and then sent to Camp Shanks, New York. In January 1944, he was sent overseas, landing in Scotland, then moved to England and Northern Ireland, where he joined the 2nd Infantry Division. From there, he was sent to Wales and took part in the Normandy Invasion on June 6, 1944, landing on Normandy on June 7, 1944.

He was on the front for 48 days, surviving on K-Rations. After 48 days, he was relieved and withdrew for 3 days, during which he received 10-in-1 rations, fresh clothes, showers, and rest before being sent back to the front. On July 26, 1944, while crossing the St. Lo Highway, he was wounded by artillery shelling that killed his lieutenant and wounded seven others. He was sent to a field hospital, operated on, and then flown to Cardiff, Wales, where he stayed until mid-September 1944.

In mid-September, he returned to the 2nd Infantry Division, D Company, 38th Regiment, in Belgium. On December 17, 1944, the first day of the Battle of the Bulge, he was captured near Viel Salm, Belgium. Awakened from his snow and water-filled foxhole before dawn, he was ordered to advance and recapture the 2nd Division Quartermaster at Viel Salm. The mission led them to a house where they discovered, too late, that it was occupied by German soldiers. The town was filled with German tanks and soldiers, creating a chaotic atmosphere. They were captured and ordered to surrender under the threat of the house being destroyed. After surrendering, they were marched from house to house as more Americans were captured, and each vacated house was blown up.

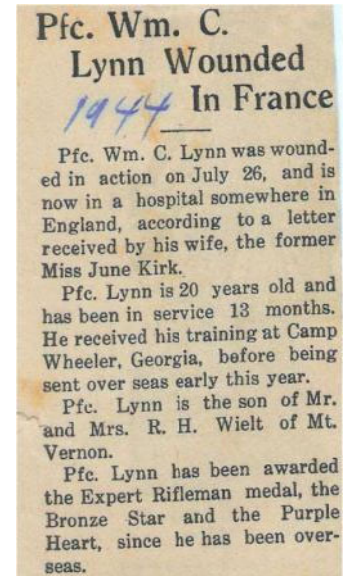
Approximately 200 soldiers were confined in a barn for three days without heat, surviving on K-rations and boiled potatoes, with no sanitation. Afterward, they were marched to a railroad. On Christmas Day, they were given a meal of rotten cabbage.

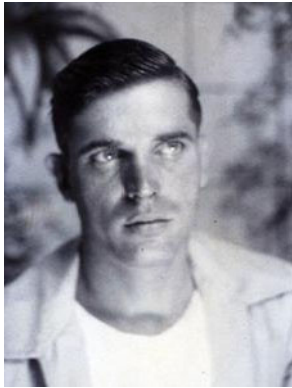


They were transported by rail in overcrowded boxcars—200 soldiers per car—without food, water, or sanitation for seven days. They arrived at Stalag 4B near Dresden, Germany, where he was held for 30 days. The camp housed 12,000 to 14,000 British Prisoners of War (POW). While there, he was stripped naked, deloused with a paintbrush in his armpits and groin, and given a typhus vaccination. Food consisted of "Skilley," a watery stew of potatoes, rotten cabbage, millet, and horse meat.

He was then assigned to a POW work gang of 40 men at a steel mill, Middle East Dutch Steel Works in Gorlitz, Germany, as a pipe bender during the winter. He worked 12-hour shifts, six days a week, and was barracked inside the mill. He endured a beating from a guard after hiding a rifle belonging to a sleeping German guard. Despite his circumstances, he admits to slowing down his work productivity as an act of defiance.

The group was later sent to the Elbe River area and assigned to a construction crew. His weight at the time of capture was 140 pounds, but it dropped to 100 pounds during his imprisonment. He endured harsh conditions, including ascending and descending





177 steps daily. He remained there until the Russians liberated him on May 13, 1945. By liberation, he weighed only 90 pounds. After the Germans abandoned him and his fellow POWs, they went house to house begging for food and were aided by a Russian-liberated POW who introduced them to German and Jewish families that provided food and clothing. However, the Russians severely abused the German women who had helped the POWs. The veteran felt guilt over his inability to prevent the abuse.

He was given a pass by a Russian officer to move through Russian lines. He joined a group of about 20 Frenchmen seeking to rejoin their forces. Together, they confiscated a horse and wagon and made their way back to American lines. He was sent to a Reprocessing Center in Halle, Germany, for two days, then flown to the American Memorial Hospital in Rheims, France. After one month there, he was sent to Le Havre, France, and then by ship to Newport News, Virginia, arriving on June 13. He received new clothes and a 60-day furlough from Fort Sheridan in Chicago, Illinois, and returned home to Mt. Vernon and Marion, Illinois.

Following his furlough, he was reassigned to Miami Beach, Florida, and then to Camp Forrest in Tullahoma, Tennessee, as a truck driver. He was discharged from Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, on November 4, 1945.

William stated that he is happily married and has lived a full and enjoyable life. However, he experiences nightmares, ulcers, and anxiety, especially around fireworks and in crowded areas. Weather changes exacerbate his service-connected foot condition, and cold weather affects his hands and feet.



*"American Ex-Prisoner of War"
bronze seal placed on William
Lynn Clark's grave marker.*