

FULL NARRATIVE FROM THE FAMILIES ON THEIR HEROES

Frank Sparacino, US Army, TEC 5. The following information came from Bob Sparacino, Frank's nephew: "My uncle Frank was killed in action in the Battle of the Bulge. He was in the 75th Division and was sent to the Ardennes Forest on December 16th, 1944. They were prepared to take over as the army of occupation. Instead, there was utter confusion. Just ahead was the 106th Infantry Division, 15,000 men preparing to settle in, so



complacent the war was coming to an end, not knowing about a German breakthrough. Many of their officers had gone on leave to Paris. The Germans attacked, many were taken prisoners. One entire Regiment of the 106th Division was captured without firing a shot. The 75th Division took their place amid all the confusion. My uncle's Regiment, 289th, went into combat on December 24, 1944. It was cold and snowing. My uncle accompanied by Frank Springer, whom after the war became a priest, went to confession in a chapel with a Chaplin doing the service. Three days after Christmas the radio section was in a barn. My uncle was on guard duty and around 3:00am my uncle told the soldiers inside: 'Get Out! we are surrounded!' The day before they had attempted to dig fox holes but the ground was so frozen they couldn't dig a deep hole. At about five or six in the morning, everything was quiet. There were no more reports of Germans around them so they started some small fires to keep from freezing. All of a sudden they heard shells going off. At first they thought it were our guns but it was incoming from the Germans. My uncle was hit in the back and the shell went thru and out his stomach. He was taken to the rear by jeep to the medics. He died sometime later, while crying out for his mother. The 75th Division received numerous awards: 4 Distinguished service crosses, 193 Silver Stars, 7 Legion of Merits,

30 Soldier Medals, 1321 Bronze Medals. 817 casualties (KIA), 3314 wounded in action, 111 died of wounds. In addition, 1500 frost bites casualties. It is a sobering thought that a Division of 15,000 men went overseas in November of 1944 lost 1,742 in 94 days of combat due to death, wounds, and frostbite. Richard, I obtained this information from Father Francis Springer, who just passed away a few months ago. We became close in past years where he performed the Marriages of two of my daughters."

More information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzvM3kD8o9k>

Harry Drew Atherton, Jr., US Navy, Seaman 2C. The following information came from Susan Atherton, his niece: “Here is the information on my uncle's fateful day on the USS Smith that led to his death.

On 26 October, 1942, scout planes from the USS Enterprise located the Japanese force. At 0944, the first



Japanese planes were sighted and Hornet was hit by bombs 30 minutes later. At 1125, Smith was attacked by a formation of 20 torpedo planes. Twenty minutes later, a Japanese torpedo plane crashed into her forecandle, causing a heavy explosion. Harry Drew Atherton, Jr., USN Seaman 2C was at the front gunner of the USS Smith and was killed upon impact.

According to one version, the torpedo carried by the plane had not exploded on impact, but did so some time later. This caused even more damage and casualties.[2] The forward part of the ship was enveloped in a sheet of smoke and flame from bursting gasoline tanks and the bridge had to be abandoned. The entire forward deckhouse was aflame, making topside forward of number one stack untenable. Smith's gunners downed six of the planes. By early afternoon, the crew had extinguished all of the fires forward—largely assisted by her Commanding Officer's decision to steer the burning ship into the wake of South Dakota.[1] With 57 killed or missing, 12 wounded, her magazines flooded, and temporary loss of steering control from the pilothouse, Smith retained her position in the screen with all serviceable guns firing. Action was broken off in the evening, and Smith headed to Noumea for temporary repairs. She

was patched up and underway for Pearl Harbor on 5 November. At Pearl Harbor, she underwent a yard overhaul and sea trials that lasted into February 1943. USS Smith was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for continuing to fight despite crippling damage to the ship.”

The Battle of Santa Cruz Islands was an important chapter in the taking of Guadalcanal early in WWII. The following You Tube videos provide an account of that battle and the role the USS Smith played in it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyh0axY9qSo>

Frank Roman, US Army, PFC. The following information was share with Joe Alex, husband of Frank's niece:

PFC FRANK M ROMAN

21ST INFANTRY REGIMENT

ARMY

HOSTILE, DIED (KIA)

DATE OF LOSS: JANUARY 4, 1952

SERVICE NUMBER: US56064036

BORN: SEPTEMBER 22, 1930

HOME OR PLACE OF ENLISTMENT

VINE HILL, CALIFORNIA

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

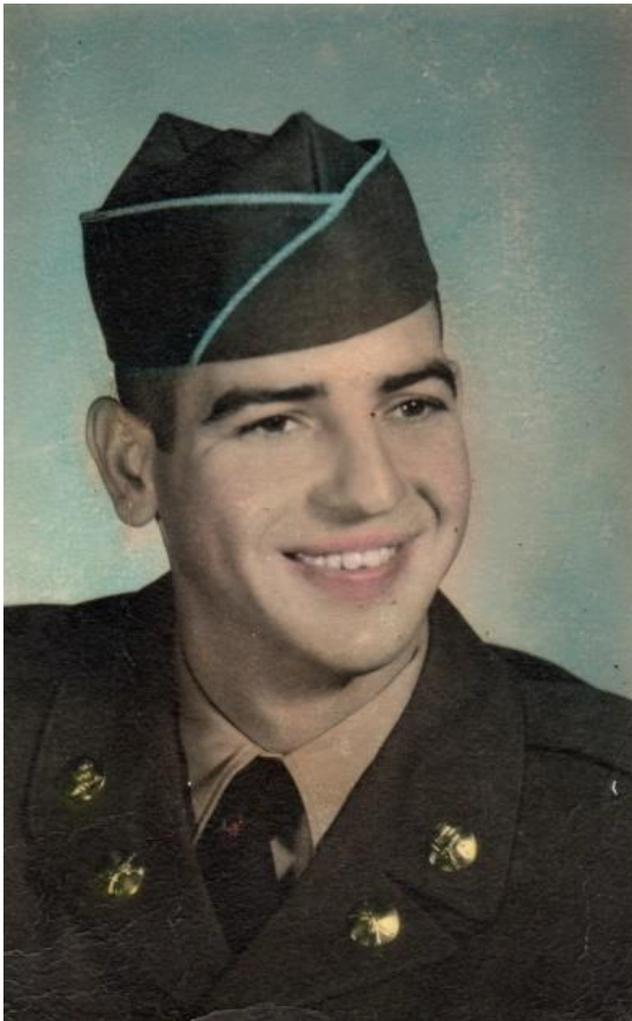
BURIAL LOCATION

HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY, HAYWARD, CA

Comments: Private First Class Roman was a member of the 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was Killed in Action while fighting the enemy in North Korea on January 4, 1952.

An extract from *A Brief History of the 24th Infantry Division in Korea*,

http://24thida.com/books/books/1956_brief_history_24th_division_Korea_OPT_SM.pdf:



October brought another large scale maneuver for the 24th. "Operation Nomad" was an offensive engaged by the 24th and two ROK divisions, designed to take over strategic positions bordering the Kumsong Valley and to disrupt his supply depots located there. At 0500 hours, 13 October, the 5th RCT moved in the first step of the operation. Against extremely stiff enemy opposition the regiment slowly moved its way up the hill that was their first objective, just falling short of reaching its crest the first night. Meanwhile, the 19th RCT pushed forward in the center of the line and the 21st made advances on the right. On 14 October the attack continued and, although enemy small arms and mortar fire seriously hampered the attack, all planned objectives for the day were secured. Enemy counterattacks during the night were generally repulsed. The attack continued the next day and successfully moved on the designated objectives.. By 15 October the original objective, "Nomad," was in the 24th Division's hands, and the attack was continued to conquer "Line Polar." During the next week the slow and difficult attack continued and the new objective was secured. By 26 October the attack was all but complete and the regiments settled down to building fortified defenses and to probing enemy lines with reconnaissance and combat patrols. Operation Nomad left the 24th Division exposed on both flanks but, in Operation Vulture, the ROK units on either side of the Division pulled up to give the UN a nearly-straight battle line in the sector.

WARRIORS REWARD

Throughout the remainder of 1951, the 24th Division maintained its line in the Kumsong sector.

More information: http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/operation_nomad/operation_nomad.htm