

1LT Robert Thompson Henry Jr. 36th Infantry Division

1919 – 1989

Robert Thompson Henry Jr. was born April 25, 1919 in Marshall, Texas. Raised in Ft. Worth, he graduated from Paschal High School, attended North Texas Agricultural College (now referred to as University of Texas at Arlington) and later transferred to the University of Texas at Austin. After enlisting in the Army National Guard in 1940, he was called to active duty when the 36th Infantry Division was activated as a member of the Division's 141st Infantry Regiment, and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant when he was 21.



141st Infantry Regiment

In September 1943, the 36th Infantry Division landed near Salerno, Italy, the first American troops to land on Europe's mainland. Four months later, while engaged in the Battle of Monte Cassino as a newly promoted 1LT, he was able to paddle a boat across the raging Rapido River to the Italian side. When the pontoon bridges for the supporting American tanks were blown up by the Germans during construction, he was unable to regroup with American forces on the southern side of the



36th Infantry Division

Rapido River. He evaded the enemy for one night but was captured by German troops the following morning on 23 January 1944. After a quick forced march from the battlefield, Henry was loaded onto a train moving north with other captured men, and arrived at Oflag 64 on 16 February 1944.



Robert T. Henry Jr., right, and Amon Carter Jr., left, with Amon Carter Sr. 1945 after their return home from Europe.

Henry was later relocated to Stalag III POW Camp at Luckenwalde, Germany, where he was interned with Amon Carter Jr. and Johnny Jones, the son of a Houston oilman. After WWII ended, Amon Carter Sr. traveled to Europe in search of his son and after learning of his location, asked a family friend, Army Officer Robert Chester (Bobby) Haltom, to help rescue Carter Jr. as Soviet troops were in the vicinity. Fortunately, this action was successful and Henry, Carter Jr., and Jones joined Carter Sr. who later remarked that these were three of the

worst looking young men he had ever seen. Henry had lost over 50 pounds during his 15 months of captivity.

After WWII, Henry worked for Carter Sr. in the Carter Oil office. In January 1951 during the Korean War, Henry completed the Army School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and became an advisor from 1953-1954 to Chiang Kai-shek's forces on Formosa, now Taiwan. Returning to the U.S., his next two assignments included being an Army adviser to an Army Reserve unit in Longview, Texas, and another European assignment with the 4th Armored Division in West Germany.

Returning to Ft. Worth in 1961 and after his retirement (at the rank of Lt. Colonel), Henry entered the business world as an employee with the Employers Casualty Company of Texas, retired in 1981, died in a Ft. Worth hospital on March 21, 1989, and was buried at Laurel Land Memorial Park.



Biography written by Kriegy Research Group writer David Stewart