



Photo was taken by Charles Fairlamb, HQ 551st, in Noirefontaine

Eric Buchanan was recently afforded the rare opportunity to transcribe a telephone interview with possibly the lone C Company survivor for the 551st PIB, Ralph Nichols. Loic Jankowiak conducted the interview and was kind enough to allow Eric to share one of Ralph's recollections of the Bulge from that interview.

Ralph Nichols, PVT, C Company:

“We hadn't slept in 3-4 days and hadn't had anything to eat but some old crackers, they were so hard. We got by all right and I laid down there. I was asleep before I laid down I guess. The only thing I had was a long Army overcoat, a wool overcoat. I laid it down and I laid on top of it. I guess I would have laid there and froze probably if one of the guys hadn't come along and stumbled over me. There was no lights, there wasn't light nowhere. He stumbled over me and it woke me up. I guess if it hadn't been for that I never would have woke up probably. It was cold. I just left the Army overcoat there. I couldn't pull it up; it was froze to the ground... COLD, boy it was cold. Cold I'm telling you. It was cold and we didn't have on...we really didn't have on no winter clothes. We had left out of France in such a hurry. We put our stuff in bags and...they will catch up to us in two or three days, they'll catch up to us. They ain't caught up to us yet. I hadn't seen my bag since. Everything I had was in that bag....all my clothes. All my clothes except what I had on and a lot of things I had picked up. It didn't mount to nothing but it was something I wanted to keep...”