

## First Lt Harley G. Hanson

Born Sep 10, 1919  
Island

Died: April 24, 1971

Service # 36221405  
Serial number - 0-768532

Period of Service: WW II  
Sources: *B10 F 2a*,  
*Cemetery 148 S*, daughter  
*Marcia Carr*  
Am Legion scrapbook-box 17

APO address: 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Cargo Squadron PM NY, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Group 10<sup>th</sup> Air Force Division.

Entered service 4/4/1942

Discharged 7/3/1945 Ft Sheridan.

Battles included India, Burma, Central Burma.

Originally rejected from volunteering for service "for insufficient teeth". Got a job as a stevedore in San Francisco, got his teeth fixed and by 1942 was at a Texas air force base learning to be a pilot. He flew the "Hump" from India to China, a mountainous route of 500 miles, where the weather was almost always terrible. At first the crew lived in grass huts surrounded by jungle. Twenty or thirty planes were lost each month. Harley flew 126 missions in 6 months with 504 hours of flying time.

Eventually his plane (a C47) went down when an air-dropped supply case tore off a stabilizer as it left the plane, leaving Lt Hanson without the ability to climb. The top of the mountain was 2500 feet above them so he had to find a safe spot to land. They were in "no man's land" in a valley lined with rice paddies in terraces. As he circled he found a rice paddy with a hay stack at the end. Cutting the power, he let the C-47 lose altitude and he landed flat on the paddy skidding into the haystack. Everyone was jolted, but not seriously hurt. To prevent the plane from falling into Japanese hands, whose machine guns could be heard nearby, they set the plane on fire, and withdrew to a safe distance, where an American patrol found them 15 minutes later and led them to safety. A jeep plane picked them up the next day, and they could see their C-47 still smoking. It was the only Combat Cargo group that got the entire crew to safety.

Lt Hanson was awarded the Air Medal with three clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross with two clusters.

For a while after leaving service he had a commercial air service. The crash caused a nervous condition he lived with till he got help at a military hospital. After his four years of service, he came back to the Island and became a mailman.

He was commander of the American Legion Post 402 in 1955, 1965 and 1966. (These remembrances were given by his daughter Marcia at a Memorial Day service at the Bethel Church in 1998)

Married Elsabe Krause 12/29/1947. Some 75 guests attended the reception at West Harbor Resort. Marcia is their daughter.

Picture on reverse side.

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