



103rd Infantry



5th Infantry

Norman Charles Hoffman
Sergeant U.S. Army
10 July 1943 – 14 February 1946

Born on 2 October 1924, Norman was raised in Wescosville, Pennsylvania. He attended the Lower Macungie Grade School across from his home, and graduated from Allentown High School in 1942. He then attended Muhlenberg College for his freshman year, and was drafted into the Army. After initial processing at Camp Cumberland, Pennsylvania, Norman was sent to Miami Beach, Florida, for basic training in the Army Air Corps. Following that, he was enrolled in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) at Oklahoma A&M College in Stillwater, Oklahoma. After three months there, the Army discontinued the ASTP and reassigned all members to the infantry. Norman reported to Camp Howze, Gainesville, Texas, for advanced military training with the 103rd Infantry Division as an ammunition bearer in heavy weapons. He attended radio school for six weeks and underwent glider training at Gainesville. The Division was then sent to Camp Shanks, New York, from where it sailed for the European Theater on Liberty Ship *USS General J.R. Brooke (AP-132)*, the flagship for a convoy of 22 ships with destroyer escorts. After zigzagging across stormy Atlantic waters for two weeks, the convoy arrived at Marseilles, France, in October 1944. The Division built a camp 20 miles north of Marseilles and cleaned and reassembled all equipment before boarding trains and trucks for the journey north into the Vosges Mountains in France, where Norman was wounded at Vahl-Ebersing. The 103rd Division was committed to action and fought its first battles through the mountains to St. Die. During the breakthrough of Bastogne, the Division was deployed near Sarreguemine, France, and command of the Division went to Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe, noted hero of Bastogne. The Division was motorized and campaigned across Alsace; the Rhineland; central Germany; and Austria, arriving there in May 1945. After two months in Innsbruck, Austria, the Division was disbanded, and Norman was reassigned to the 5th Infantry Division. Norman was returned to the States for redeployment to the Pacific Theatre at the war's end, and subsequently was assigned to the staff of a German prisoner-of-war camp at which 690 draftees and another 1,000 hard-core Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (SS) prisoners were interred. After his discharge from the Army as a Sergeant, Norman returned to Wescosville and he re-entered Muhlenberg College. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1950. He then completed a Master of Arts



USS Brooke (AP-132)



Norman (in rear) observing teaching

Degree at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1952, and worked as a reading specialist, assisting teachers in Upper Dublin Township schools. Norman married **Claire Elaine Windsor** (born 16 December 1927) on 4 June 1949 in Watchung Presbyterian Church in North Plainfield, New Jersey. They had three children: **Wayne Charles**, **Bryan Andrew**, and **Freya Kathleen**. Norman has been active as a volunteer for Perkiomin Valley Opportunity Committee; Meals on Wheels; Goschenhoppen Historians; and Habitat for Humanity, and has been a Douglas Township election poll worker for 25 years. Currently, Norman serves on the Board of the Goschenhoppen Historians and the Board of the Pennsylvania German Society. Norman's parents were **Norman Henry Hoffman** (2 December 1895 – 17 June 1963) and **Bessie Kate Haas** (23 December 1896 – 13 January

1992). Two of Norman's brothers also served in World War II, **Erwin Arthur** in the Army and **Wilbert Oliver** in the Navy. Two other brothers, **Lamont Lewis** and **Russell Frederick**, served during the 1950s; Lamont in the Army and Russell in the Navy.