

Serving the nation



**W. Paul May, Sr.
In Uniform**

W. Paul May, Sr. spent 43 months overseas during World War II. He enlisted in the U.S. Army (RAAF) in February 1940 and was stationed in Alaska when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

The father of Eddie L. May of Crockett was a technician in the 1st Battalion 4th Infantry Regiment when he was engaged in the battle for Attu in the Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska.

A little known fact is that this was the only battle fought in American territory in WWII.

According to the son of this veteran, "Most people around may not know what my father did in WWII, but will remember what he did in Crockett Merchants Little League for many years."

In a telephone conversation with the veteran's widow, Bobbie Gibson May said that the senior May coached and managed teams and then served as president of the league for over 21 years.

The couple wed in 1953 and was married for 35 years. He was born Sept. 4, 1915 in Lovelady and died in 1987. Mrs. May still lives in the home they shared in Crockett.

She related that when her husband came back from the war he was "a sick veteran with 100 percent disability." She said that he "fought that war and the Japanese all the time" and never forgot his wartime experiences.

The couple had two sons, Eddie and Roy May; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren have been added to the family. Children from a



**Paul May, Sr.
Merchant's Little League**

previous marriage include William Paul, Jr. and Paula May Hall.

Mrs. May told of her late husband's mother, Florence May Dobson, who at one time had five sons serving in the U.S. Military during WWII.

May's dog tags and other personal effects were actually sent to Mrs. Dobson in Lovelady when her son was

mistakenly listed as "missing in action."

Mrs. May commented on that sad fact and said, "I don't know how mothers and families stood it back then."

E. L. May submitted an article written from a WWII publication called "Salvo" about May, Sr.'s military experience during the battle of Attu. Readers should remember that the article was written from a perspective of the times of WWII and may not be considered "politically correct" today.

A veteran of the battle of Attu in the Aleutians is among a group of infantrymen transferred to the RAAF last week. He is T/Sgt. William P. May who spent 43 months overseas in an 81-mm mortar platoon.

Stationed at Adak in the Aleutian chain when the Japs attacked at Pearl Harbor, the sergeant went ashore on Attu May 11, 1943 to fight a hell-on-earth battle that lasted 28 days.

May is quick to grin about his experiences now but he says a guy gets plenty scared in combat... "None of us were constipated, you can bet on that," he avers.

"During an all-out battle you don't know what you're doing

except that you keep it going. You really love that gun—it's your life. I've kissed mine thousands of times," May says.

After surviving the landing on Attu and fighting through the main battle, the sergeant found himself in the midst of the final bloody Jap "banzai" attack when the Nips, crazed by dope, overran the Yank positions in a wild orgy of killing.

"We fought back with everything we could put our hands on," he says of the charge. "We used grenades, bayonets, rifles and what have you. Everything was confusion. The Japs seized our 81-mm mortars and turned them on us.

"I was standing in a gully when one of our own mortar shells came down on me. I heard it coming but there was no use moving. The shell smacked right between my legs. Looking down I saw that the Japs had failed to pull the safety pin. That's why I'm here today.

"A lot of us are alive because the Japs didn't pull the pins out of those shells. And the fact that a lot of their knee mortar ammo turned out duds helped too," he says.

One of May's hands still bears scars made by a Jap's teeth. In an attack he jumped into a foxhole and landed next to a Nip who was sitting up with his eyes open. After knocking out all the Jap's teeth, May discovered he was already dead.

"The Japs have plenty of guts," he declares. "A lot of times when we'd toss grenades at them, they'd throw 'em right back at us and learned to dodge fast."

When May went overseas he weighed 180 pounds. Today he weighs only 132. He still has bad headaches caused by a bomb that burst 15 feet from his foxhole, blowing him 10 feet in the air.

And all is not a bed of roses now that he's back from combat. Sometimes he says a nightmare will appear in the middle of the night and he will be back in hand-to-hand combat with a Jap. Many is the time his tentmates would wake up and empty a carbine through the tent.

