

**National Archives & Records Administration
War Department Files
CAPT Charles A. Dieterlen
Class 28-42**

ID: O1169083

Branch of Service: U.S. Army

Hometown: Clark County, IN

Status: KIA 24 Feb 1945



Killed in action serving with the 601st Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) in France

From the 601st website: By October 15th, 1944, the 601st was on French soil. The 601st and 602nd were assigned the northernmost part of the area held by the Allies. They were attached to the "First Airborne Task Force" in direct support to the "509th Parachute Infantry Battalion." They continued to support the 509th until March 15th, 1945, occupying a position near Peira Cava in the Alps near Nice. The 601st stayed in the northernmost position of the mountains of southern France for the winter. A 601st member remembered seeing Captain Charles A. Dieterlen killed on Feb. 24th, 1945. Captain Dieterlen stepped on a land mine, just north of Nice, France.



Flagpole at the entrance of Mount Moriah Cemetery, New Washington, Indiana



Military Funeral for Captain Charles A. Dieterlen – photo taken by LT Marlin E. Dick

The battalion consisted of three firing batteries and Headquarters and Service (H/S) Battery. The service platoon transported ammunition and general supplies by means of about 50 pack mules, herded by men on riding mules with use of a bell mare. Smaller numbers of mules, each led by a walking "mule driver", were organic to the communications and fire direction center (FDC) elements. The wire section had three teams, each consisting of two men and one mule, used to lay wire from the FDC to the firing batteries. Each of those mules carried two large reels of wire, mounted on spokes on either side of the packsaddle; from these wire was unreeled at a walking pace. H/S Battery also included the pilots and crews of the two L-5 liaison planes organic to each battalion, plus veterinary, horseshoeing, and saddler personnel.

A firing battery consisted of four howitzer sections. Communication from FDC to the battery executive officer was usually by wire, and from him to the sections was verbal. The section was composed of three elements; one 75mm pack howitzer, eleven men, and ten pack mules.

The howitzer weighed about 1300 pounds and was designed for quick disassembly into approximately ten components, for transport on six mules. Heaviest component was the front trail, at some 240 pounds, followed by the tube at some 220 pounds. Each of these was a full load, and these two required the best mules in the section. Four men, with two steel lifting bars, were required in loading or unloading these two components. At the other end of the spectrum was the mule which carried a combination load consisting of the breechblock (two men and one lifting bar) and the wheels.



Buried in Mount Moriah Cemetery, New Washington, Indiana