



WWII and Korean War records at the National Archives for Oliver James Webb have burned and are minimally available. Various other records are available.

Ancestry.com shows he enlisted in the "Army Air Corps" in WWII; Bob Webb also remembers his dad talking about being a bombardier at some point. At that time, the Air Corps was part of the Army. Later, the Air Corps became part of the Air Force. An obituary from Greenwich, Connecticut shows he enlisted in the 7th Air Corps during WWII, which served in the South Pacific theater.

Arlington Cemetery has records that show his unit was the 192nd Field Artillery Battalion. This appears to be from his Korean War Service. This picture can also be analyzed to deconstruct part of his military service. It appears to be taken circa 1950.



The patch on the sleeve is the insignia for the 43rd Infantry Division, largely composed of New England men from Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The grape leaf stands for "Vinland" because it was thought Vikings were referring to these States when they came to North America. Vikings found grapes in "Vinland."

The pin on his shoulder appears to be the 192nd Field Artillery Crest. The design reflects the unit's long history. The Red Cross represents service during the Revolutionary War; the Blue X represents Civil War service; the Fleur-de-Lis represents WWI service. The 192nd FA Battalion is the Connecticut National Guard unit.



There are 2 pins on each lapel. They stand for the rank of Field Artillery Officer. On Oliver's pin is also the "192" designation.



There are 3 award ribbons above his left pocket. In order from left to right they appear to be:

- >Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal Ribbon with 3 or 4 stars;
- >American Campaign Ribbon;
- >WWII Victory Ribbon.

From these 4 clues then, and from the records at Arlington Cemetery as of 1950, it appears Oliver served with the 192nd Field Artillery Battalion during the Korean War which became a part of the 43rd Artillery Division.

Due to the obituary, army enlistment records, award ribbons, and family memory, it appears Oliver served in the 7th Air Corps during WWII. (The Air Corps became the Air Force during WWII.) These ribbons bear a closer look to glean more information.

There is still a discrepant record from the National Archives: a medical record for Oliver at a German hospital for a staph infection in the hip/buttock in July 1944. It doesn't seem likely that he'd be sent to Germany from the South Pacific for medical care - New Zealand or Hawaii would have been the more likely respite location.

Unless further evidence is found, there might not be a more specific explanation for this record.



American Campaign Medal

7TH AIR FORCE



Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal

There were several units of the 7th Air Force and all were tasked with different missions. At times, some of these units joined forces with other air force or infantry divisions. Because Bob Webb remembers his dad talking about being a bombardier, it seems likely Oliver James might have ended up in a Bombardment Group. Within the 7th Air Force, there were 6 Bombardment Groups: 5th, 11th, 30th, 41st, 307th, and 319th.

Out of those 6 groups, three of them first served on the coast of California out of March Field flying anti-submarine patrols. One of Oliver's ribbons is the American Campaign Medal, which indicates part of his service was in the American theater, generally considered to be in the continental U.S., along both coasts and/or Alaska. The American Campaign Medal that Oliver earned is usually awarded to soldiers for anti-submarine warfare service. The 30th, 41st and 307th Bombardment group in the 7th Air Force all saw this kind of service.

One other group, the 319th Bombardment Group, served in the European theater until 1944 before joining the 7th Air Force in the South Pacific. If Oliver was part of this group, it would help explain how he received medical care in Germany in 1944, but also won an Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal.

The Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal confirms that Oliver James saw action in the South Pacific. In addition, although the picture of him in his uniform is black and white, his ribbons shows 4 stars. It appears these are "service stars" which are usually awarded for the number of engagements a soldier experienced. Out of 21 possible engagements, the 7th Air Force participated in several of those. Additionally, the color of the stars can't be determined. One bronze star equals 5 silver stars (and 1 silver star = 1 engagement), so without seeing the color of the stars it's not possible to actually determine how many engagements Oliver won stars for.

Since his unit can't be definitively determined at this time without further records, some of the major battles of the 7th Air Force in the South Pacific follow.....

1942