Hello Paul!

We've not a Swope, just a Smith--and we live in Evansville. I discovered your site while doing some research on my late father. His name was Billy Walker Smith and was one of the original members of the 502 Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne. He was in the first platoon of Fox "F" company. Your story about the 502 in McCutchanville was a nice piece of history of their time spent at the airport in Evansville. He was an Ohio farm boy and while here he met my Mom and they married. He was 19 and she was 14 passing for 18 so she could work in the City. She was from Central City, KY. He returned here after the war and they had 4 children, including myself, and divorced in 1965. He was partially disabled, however he made a good living as a carpenter and even had his own aluminum siding business in the city for a few years. He moved to New Orleans in the late 60s after hurricane Camille hit the Mississippi gulf coast. He moved back to Evansville in 1986 so he could be treated for his colon cancer at the Marion, IL Veterans hospital. He passed away in 1987 at the age of 64.

My older brother was born one month before he made his jump into Normandy. His company was scattered all over the place and was at least 5 miles from their drop zone. He landed near some German troops and had to fight his way to cover. He was wounded and captured a week later and spent the remainder of the war as a POW at Stalag 4B Muhlberg Sachsen 51-13. He was reported missing in action for 5 months until the Red Cross got his letter out to my Mom. She notified the war department that he was alive.

My research turned up one member of his company who sent me this copy of a photo he took of my father sitting on a step at Ft Bragg in 1942.
He and other survivors of Fox Company did not know my father survived the war. They assumed he was killed in action.

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