

## **Fred Earl Huddleston**

Fred Huddleston was born June 13, 1913, in Raleigh County West Virginia. Fred was raised in Sandstone, West Virginia, then later lived in Hinton. He married Thelma May Bear in 1934. He graduated from Sandstone High School. He graduated college, but as of this writing, the name of the school is undiscovered. Fred had two daughters, Marilyn and Phyllis.

He went to work on the C & O Railway as a track laborer in Hinton. He was promoted to Force Foreman. He was then promoted to Assistant Cost Engineer in Covington, Kentucky. He lived in various towns, including Circleville, Ohio, working for the C & O. Each time he was promoted, he was relocated. He lived in the C & O corporate headquarters City of Huntington, West Virginia, where he had been promoted to Regional Assistant Chief Engineer. He retired in 1971 but remained as a consultant. In 1973, the C & O merged with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the headquarters was established in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1973, Fred relocated to Melbourne, Florida. An unexpected sudden illness claimed his life. Chessie System and Seaboard Coastline Industries later (1980) merged in CSX and the corporate offices were established in Jacksonville, Florida in 1987.

Fred was instrumental in developing a new program for the Chessie System in 1969 to train new employees to become Maintenance of Way track officials. In the Spring of 1969, he called his good friend, Irvin Maddy in Hinton. Fred knew that there were good hard-working families in Summers County. He asked Irvin to find him some college students, graduated or attending, to meet for a group job interview. Irvin found Fred 12 young men for the interview. From that interview, six of those young guys accepted entry level positions throughout the Chessie System. They were Lynn Maddy – Akron, Ohio, Jim Cashwell – Pikeville, Kentucky, David Pettry – Grafton, WV, Sam Linkenhoker – Willard, Ohio, Robert “Cotty” Farley – Cumberland, Maryland, and Jimmy Noel – Washington, Pennsylvania. Of those six, Cashwell and Pettry made a full career and retired with Chessie and CSX, both located in the Jacksonville, Florida area. Fred’s program consisted of hiring new employees and training them in different facets of Maintenance of Way departments. Having completed their training, they would be promoted. The departments were Track Department, Production Crews, Bridge Department, Signal Department, and Engineering Corps. This made them well rounded in their field. They would become Assistant Track Supervisors, then Track Supervisors, Engineer of Track and so on. This inventive program was very successful for Chessie and would become the standard for M of W training.

Fred had a unique story within the military. He was called into activity Reserve Army duty, February 2, 1942, and was stationed at Camp Wheeler Georgia with the 88<sup>th</sup> Division. He later attended Officers Infantry School of Rifles and Heavy Weapons at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon his graduation from this school, he was stationed at Camp Gruber Oklahoma, where he was in command of Company G. He later participated in the Louisiana Maneuvers and was made Executive Officer for that time.

In September 1943 he attended an advanced class on foreign mines and demolition at Camp Polk Louisiana. From there he went to Fort Benning Georgia to take a Battalion Commander and Staff Officers training course. During this time, the 88<sup>th</sup> Division was called for overseas duty and Major Huddleston left for duty in Italy. He was given command of C Company 350<sup>th</sup> and later led them into battle and stayed with them until the fall of Rome. He also served in the 34<sup>th</sup> Division in Cassino. In addition, he also served with the British and took place with an amphibious landing on the crossing of the Garigliano. In June 1944, he was assigned to the Special Units Battalion and given command of the Antitank Company, 350<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, where he served on front line duty until September of that year. At that time, he was made an Infantry Instructor in Infantry Schools behind the lines. At the termination of these schools, Major Huddleston, because of his unique and vast knowledge of railroad infrastructure,

was appointed Track Supervisor with the 701<sup>st</sup> Railway Guard Division Mediterranean Theater Division of Operations, where he oversaw 25,000 Germans who were rebuilding the railroads destroyed by war in Italy. He was decorated by the Italian government with the Order of the Crown of Italy. Overseas 21 months, Major Huddleston saw combat with the 350<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the “Blue Devil” Infantry Division. He wore the Mediterranean Theater Ribbon with four Battle Participation Stars and the Combat Infantryman’s Badge.

Fred returned from the war and with his wife and family and resumed his career with the C & O Railway. Fred had a unique career and an outstanding military performance.

He passed on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1973, of heart failure in a Florida hospital. Masonic Lodge 61 of Hinton conducted graveside rites. He is buried in Restwood Cemetery in Summers County.

## **Fred E. Huddleston**

**We Salute You!**

