



## Virgil Walker

August 7, 1918 - August 30, 2013

Virgil L. Walker, Jr., Summerville, SC, widower of Leona P. Walker, passed away August 30, 2013.

Virgil L. Walker, Jr., was born August 7, 1918, in Hardy, Arkansas, to Virgil L. Walker, Sr., and Myrtle (Bates) Walker. During Virgil's growing-up years, the Walker family lived mostly in Hardy, but also lived in Batesville, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, for periods of time.

Virgil graduated from Hardy High School in 1936. Soon after, he started work for the St. Louis San Francisco Railroad (known as the Frisco) in Hardy as a train meeter. The Frisco, headquartered in Springfield, Missouri, served nine states: Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Virgil soon became a telegrapher/operator on the "extra board"—which meant that he went any place on the railroad where someone was needed to fill in for a period from a day up to a month or more. On the telegrapher "extra board," Virgil worked many different places, from Pensacola, Florida, to various stations in Oklahoma during that state's wheat harvest, and many places in between. One of those, Bridge Junction, in Arkansas, he could only reach by walking from the railroad's Memphis yard across the Mississippi River on the railroad bridge. The Frisco Railroad was merged into the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad in 1980.

In July 1941, Virgil was drafted into the army. After basic training at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, he received advanced infantry and desert warfare training at Camp Roberts, California. Upon completion, and up until August

1944, Virgil was a firearms instructor and a drill instructor at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, and Camp Fannin, Tyler, Texas. While at Camp Fannin, he married Leona P. Ellis, also of Hardy, Arkansas, September 5, 1943.

September 5, 1944, Virgil sailed from New York Harbor to Europe as a battlefield replacement, aboard the Queen Mary, in use as a troopship. Virgil joined the 104th Infantry Division (Timberwolf Division) in France November 1944, and fought the German Army until the war ended in Europe. Virgil's division was one of those which met the Soviet Army on the Elbe River when the allies cut Germany in half. Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen commanded the 104th Infantry Division. In 178 days of combat, beginning October 24, 1944 and continuing until the war's end in Europe May 8, 1945, the division suffered 7,011 battle casualties.

During his combat service, Virgil was the infantry squad leader of the 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 415th Infantry Regiment, 104th Infantry Division. Virgil received the following medals and badges: Combat Infantryman Badge; Bronze Star; Presidential Unit Citation; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, with two campaign stars authorized: one each for the Rhineland Campaign and the Central Europe Campaign; Army of Occupation Medal with Germany Clasp; American Defense Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Good Conduct Medal; and Firearms Expert Badge with Rifle Bar.

After victory in Europe, the 104th Infantry Division was rushed back to the United States to prepare for the invasion of Japan. While the 104th was being refitted, President Truman ordered atomic bombs dropped on Japan, ending the war, and making the invasion unnecessary. Many years later, Virgil learned the 104th Infantry Division had been designated to go in at Tokyo. Honorably discharged, Virgil returned to work for the Frisco. In the latter 1940's, Virgil became the Frisco station agent at Hardy, Arkansas. In 1948, a son, Terry L. Walker, was born to Virgil and Leona. In 1953, Virgil was assigned as the telegrapher/operator at the Frisco depot in Aurora, Missouri, where he and his family moved. Having also trained as a train dispatcher,

while at Aurora Virgil also worked the “extra board” as a train dispatcher at Frisco headquarters in Springfield, Missouri. In 1959, Virgil was appointed as the Frisco agent in Seymour, Missouri, where he and his family moved, with Virgil continuing as an “extra board” dispatcher while at Seymour. In 1963, Virgil was appointed a full-time train dispatcher, and he and his family moved to Springfield, Missouri, where Virgil dispatched trains from then until he retired in 1979. Virgil and Leona lived in Springfield until 2005, when they moved to Summerville, South Carolina, to be near family.

Virgil was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Leona; a stillborn son, William Wayne Walker; a brother, William Fergus “Buddy” Walker and sister-in-law, Ruth McDaniel Walker.

Virgil is survived by his son, Terry L. Walker (Winnice), Summerville, SC; two grandsons, Matthew L. Walker (Andrea), Summerville, SC and Ethan B. Walker, North Charleston, SC; a great-granddaughter, Brooke Grace Walker, North Charleston, SC; a nephew, William Ted Walker (Geneva), Trumann, Arkansas, a niece, Becky Jane (Robert) Frost, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and two great nieces and three great-great nieces.

The family will receive friends from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the funeral home on Monday evening, September 2, 2013. Funeral service will be 10:00 am Tuesday morning, September 3, 2013 at Northside Baptist Church, 7800 Northside Drive, North Charleston, SC. Interment will follow at Dorchester Memory Gardens, 11000 Dorchester Road, Summerville, SC 29485

# Tribute Wall



“ *Virgil Walker*

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September 29, 2022 at 10:11 AM