

# Ruben "Rube" Waddell

## Maj., USAF (Ret.), 1949 - 1967

CONTRIBUTED BY: EILEEN WADDELL, CHERYL WADDELL BEGLEY,  
WILLIAM WADDELL, DAUGHTERS & SON

Maj. Rube Waddell was a teenage foot soldier during WWII, then piloted Air Force cargo planes for nearly two decades. Landing in Beirut, between the sea and the mountains, was harrowing, he said. Choosing whether to eat sheep's eyeballs in a Bedouin tent or steaks in a restaurant in Cairo, Egypt seemed a no-brainer. And the South Pole was a place NO ONE wanted to be. What he didn't talk about was war. Was dropping troops and tanks into South Vietnam. Was flying over Cambodia and taking fire. Was wondering if he would get back to a warm house, three kids and a wife.



- Eileen Waddell, daughter

I don't recall much from his service days, other than really being proud of him and impressed with his progression through the ranks. He was a great leader, and those who served under him loved and respected him. I always wanted to impress him, and aspired to be as brilliant as he was. Two of my proudest moments were when I developed a love for photography, and when I decided to study engineering. Dad encouraged my interest in each by giving me his camera collection, and his engineering books / notes.

- Cheryl Waddell Begley, daughter

*My grandpa Ruben was born and raised in Yellow Dog, a mining town in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania. After high school, He worked in the mine for two years, until he was drafted into the army in October of 1942. He was sent overseas in 1943, traveling by sea to northern Africa and then on to Italy, serving in the Rome-Arno, Northern Apennines, and Po Valley campaigns as an MP in the 88th infantry division.*

*When he returned in 1945, he went back to work in the mine. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1948, and, while awaiting officer training school, he became a taxi driver in Kittanning, PA, where he met my grandma, Audrey. A waitress at the time, she sliced the her finger in the kitchen one night, her boss hailed a cab to take her to the hospital. All's well that ends well: Her finger was fine, and a lifelong romance was just beginning.*

- Turner Waddell, granddaughter

*Pictured: Waddells' Wedding Day, photos from Billy Waddell, son*



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