

War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Robert Elsmore

Current home town: Mansfield, Ohio

Age: 90

Submitted with assistance of Cecelia K. Whittenberger.

Robert Elsmore of Summit County, Ohio, was drafted by the Army early in 1942 and trained at Camp Walters in Texas. He had the choice of working in communications, the motor pool or combat intelligence. He chose combat intelligence, which involved scouting and patrolling.

These young men spent some time off the base doing scrap scouting to round up scrap metals that could be reused for the war effort. They also trained off base on scouting runs, where they were dropped off with just a compass and a box lunch. One day, his group pitched the box lunches and ate at "a local greasy spoon." Soon, Bob was experiencing what appeared to be food poisoning. "A local doctor checked me out. A pool table served as a bed. He told my commanding officer it was a belly ache. My officer didn't buy that, so I was packed in the back of a staff car and driven almost 100 miles back to camp for another check."

Turns out, it was appendicitis. Bob was off duty healing from surgery for the next few weeks. During that time his unit was shipped out to the South Pacific. Bob ended up in the city of Oran in North Africa, serving as a warehouseman. "There was so much equipment coming in for the invasion of Italy. We had enough camouflage netting to cover Europe. We had everything the engineers would need, from nails to Bailey Bridges."

Eventually Bob was transferred to a supply depot in Naples, Italy, to finish out his three plus years of service.

Bob remembers the trip back to the States aboard the *USS Wasp*, a converted aircraft carrier. No planes were onboard and beds were stacked head high in the flight decks to house the thousands of returning soldiers. Bob felt lucky to be assigned a smaller area where the bunks weren't stacked as high. He also recalls the prow of the Wasp was damaged from a previous encounter with a Pacific Ocean typhoon.

Bob returned to Ohio, married a gal his twin sister introduced him to, raised four children and worked at Seiberling Tire for 45 years. Bob lives here at Elmcroft of Ontario Assisted Living Community. Bob was born in December 1921. He enjoys woodworking and has quite the sense of humor. He told us of his high school time, saying he built the trophy case for the school and cabinets for the chemistry lab, and that he "loved all the girls, some of them twice."