

War Era Story Project 2012

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I entered the Army in November 1942 at Fort Thomas, Kentucky. We received our physicals and our shots and were issued our clothing. After about three days, we boarded a train bound for somewhere. There were no sleeper cars so we sat up for about three or four days. We finally arrived in Maysville, California. We then boarded trucks and were taken to Camp Beale, California, which would be our retreat home for the next year. The camp site was still under construction and there was a shortage of barracks. I ended up on the second floor with about 40 other guys. We slept on canvas cots with no room in between us. There was one latrine for about 80 guys and it was very crowded.

We started basic training for the next six weeks, doing a lot of marching and exercises. We learned about our vehicles, tanks, half-tracks, etc., and also our Jeeps. We spent a lot of time on the firing range, in the field, as much as a week at a time. We trained for about a year and in December 1943 we shipped out for Camp Bowie, Texas where more training took place.

In November 1944, we were told we were going to be shipped overseas. We sailed from New Jersey. About two days out in sea, our ship broke down and we were towed back to New Jersey. We boarded another ship for the trip across the Atlantic. We slept on canvas cots attached to the side of the ship, not the most comfortable! We arrived in Le Havre, France after about eight days. I slept in the loft of a barn, which was very cold and there was plenty of snow. We moved up to the front lines and had our first combat experience in Zybrucken, Germany. We were on mop-up duty and next moved to Koln to assist in clearing out enemy fighting there. We had some losses in both cities.

We moved on and took part in the Battle for the Ruhr Valley. We next moved to Duisburg and then on to the Rhine River. The Germans had blown up the bridges and we had to wait for engineers to build platoon bridges. There was more fighting as the Germans tried to keep us from crossing the Rhine. Along the way, we saw many German soldiers along the roadside. We also saw 10 or 12 G.I.s shot in the back by Germans.

The living conditions were not good most of the time, sleeping on the ground. Occasionally, we would take over a home and slept there. We next moved onto the Danube River to Plattling. The war in Europe ended May 7, 1945 for the 131 Armored Division. We traveled about 1,600 miles since we left Le Havre. Our division consumed about 1,900,000 rounds of ammo for our artillery, machine guns, rifles, etc. We also used about 1,800,000 gallons of fuel for our tanks, half-tracks and Jeeps.

We were scheduled to be sent to Japan from Germany, however, we were sent back to the states for a little R & R. While at home in August, the war in Japan ended and we reported back to Camp Cooke, California. There I spent the last six months as an M.P. in San Francisco. In February 1946, I was sent home and discharged. We had 214 killed in action and 910 wounded.