

## War Era Story Project 2012

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Current home town: Poland, Ohio  
Age: 93

Born 1919 in Youngstown, OH, I grew up and was schooled in Struthers, OH. I Graduated from Struthers High School in 1940 and enlisted in the U.S. Army February 12, 1940. I was assigned to U.S. Army Signal School at Ft. Monmouth, NJ, and trained as a Field Radio Operator. I was assigned to the 1st Signal Co., 1st Infantry Division, at Ft. Monmouth, NJ, in May 1940. I trained with The Big Red One (1st Infantry Div.) in field and amphibious (Higgins Boats) operations until February 1942. I was promoted from Private to Buck Sgt.

In February 1942, I was assigned to New York Port of Embarkation and trained as a Shipboard Radio Operator (national and international procedures) and then assigned to the S.S. *James Lykes* as Chief Radio Operator with two Corporal assistants. We sailed from April 1942 to May 1943, carrying ammunition and general cargo to the Middle East (Egypt, via S. Africa). Then came ashore at New York and I was assigned to local operations until spring of 1944.

I made application for Aviation Cadet, was accepted and ordered to McDill AFB, Tampa, FL. Before training started, our class was given the option to return to our original station or attend OCS due to the fact that cadet training quota had been met. There were no Signal Corps vacancies, so I chose the Transportation Corps, New Orleans AFB, New Orleans, LA. I attended OCS training from May 1944 - September 1944, then was assigned to the New York Port of Embarkation and then to the Port Signal Office. From that day on, I was back in the Signal Corps.

I served there until October 1945, when WWII was over, and chose to return to civilian life. I returned to Struthers, OH and partied with the gang of WWII returnees until January 1946, when I started college (GI Bill) at Youngstown College, Youngstown, OH. Though living at home, the \$60.00 a month stipend wasn't enough, so I took a job at Westinghouse Transformer Plant in Sharon, PA (11 p.m. to 7 a.m., five nights a week). I went to college afternoons and evenings.

As luck would have it, in June 1947 the Signal Corps was looking for Company Grade Officers (Lt., Capt.) to return to active duty, and was I ever ready! A quick response and I was ordered to active duty on July 1947 and assigned to the Antilles Department in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Had several Post Signal Officer/Company Commander assignments (Jointly), and in January 1950 returned to CONUS (the States), where I was assigned to the Signal School, Ft. Monmouth, NJ. After two years there, I got a call from the Pentagon: "Get down here; we have a job for you." The job was Signal Officer for a Transportation Corps expedition on the Greenland Ice Cap to take place starting that spring. It was difficult planning (few Army personnel had ever been there), although the Air Force had a base at Thule, Greenland, which was used as a staging area.

The challenge: Could we fight a war there if we had to? Transportation was a huge problem. The area was so dry the snow wouldn't compact, and present day equipment (effective in Alaska & Canada) wouldn't work. The project had national interest and the useable season (April- October) was spent by research parties at various locations on the Ice Cap, looking for answers. We returned to CONUS in October 1953, spent the winter and early spring evaluating the data, and in April 1954, went back with the ideas. There were actually only two workable options: 1) A La Toumo (huge, low-pressure tire vehicle (like a locomotive) to pull a sled load; and 2) A modified Caterpillar tractor (48" wide treads). In October 1954, the research was terminated and actual operation started (both in Greenland and Antarctica).

My next assignment was the Signal Division, Pentagon, for four years (1954---1958) in the Personnel Department (both enlisted men and officer units). In 1955, I went to the Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS. Also that same year, I was selected to be integrated into the Regular Army Officers Corps, and associated with the class of 1946, West Point, NY.

I left the Pentagon in 1958 and spent a year with Industry (AT&T), and in 1959 was assigned to the Signal Division, HQ COMZ Orleans, France, as head of the Engineering Section. After three years of working all over Europe, I returned to CONUS and was assigned as Signal Officer, 2nd Infantry Div., and Commander of the 122nd Signal Battalion at Ft. Benning, GA. The battalion supported the Division.

The 2nd Division was the Infantry Division of the Strike Force and field trained all the time. I also did a number of desegregation operations of high schools and colleges. We came close to a big one when President Kennedy told Nikita Khrushchev to "take the missiles out of Cuba." The Strike Force, the Air force and the Navy were at the ready to see that he did it. Khrushchev blinked and "took them out."

Next assignment (1964) was Signal Officer, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY. At this time, the Army had just received the approval of "most everyone living" to, in order to enlarge the Cadet Corps and keep it at West Point, tear down the old barracks (vintage 1800 buildings), relocate a number of statues and remove some trees, etc. Site preparation was the biggest problem for me and the Engineer Officer. All utilities must be underground. In that area (8-10 inches of topsoil and then NY State granite), you didn't dig trenches with a backhoe alone, but with dynamite and then the backhoe. It took two years to get ready for the new construction (steel and concrete-faced with 6" thick granite blocks). I've been back to visit several times - the new has weathered in to look just like the old.

Then in 1967, my last active year and with four military kids (Ft. Monmouth 1952; Ft. Eustis 1954; La Chapelle Hospital, France 1960 and West Point 1965) in the house, I figured it was time to retire and get started on a civilian life, for the kids would be around for some time. So on August 1, 1967, a group of Officers and I stood on the Plain and saluted a Cadet Review for the last time. My wife of thirty-six years is buried there. Someday, I'll join her.