

War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Charles C. Caskey, Sr.

Current home town: Fairborn, Ohio

Age: 90

I was 19 years old living in Fairborn with my uncle, working at Wright-Patt. I was drafted in 1941. I first went to Camp Buckner, North Carolina, where I took my basic training in the 92nd medical gas treatment battalion. Then I went to the 93rd, then to Camp Shanks, New York. Then I rode on the Queen Mary to Glasgow, Scotland. There were 1,900 people on the Queen Mary that trip. The ship had been converted to hold the G.I.s. It took us five days and nights.

I was in Portland, England, on a little island off Weymouth. They asked me help with the wounded but I said "no," I was a trucker. I was in England until the invasion of France at Omaha Beach. I landed in Omaha Beach, France, and drove my truck out to a landing strip. Ironically, my father-in-law landed at the same place during WW I. We were headed toward Berlin. We went to Achen, Germany, and set up, but had to get out because the Battle of the Bulge was imminent. We retreated to Belgium.

I was a trucker and hauled the wounded to the Air Force plane where they were taken to Paris, then some went back to England. The truck I was driving was new and I used it like a bed. I had a cot and about 18-20 blankets in the back. My sergeant told me I was supposed to sleep in the tent, but it was raining and he was soaking wet, so I stayed in my truck.

I stayed with a Belgian family when I would come and go, and I gave them some blankets. One of the daughters made a really nice coat out of it. I was in Belgium and went back to Omaha Beach to pick up supplies. On my way back, my truck broke down and they sent five German prisoners to get my truck with a five-ton wrecker. They had it fixed by the next day and I was on my way again. On the way, there was a young boy on the side of the road waving money. He wanted gasoline, so I stopped and gave him one of my five-gallon cans of gas. I was broke, so the money looked good to me!

We followed General Patton across France. In Germany, some of the liberated American soldiers came to our camp. I gave them k-rations. I got within 50 miles of Berlin and they sent me back home. I caught a boat in the southern part of France and went to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. There was a storm in the Atlantic and it was very rough. They made us all go below deck on account of the storm. I went from there to an army post in Indiana. I caught a bus in Lexington, KY and went home to West Liberty, KY.

I stayed around home for about a year then I came to Fairborn. I got a job in 1945 or 1946 at Frigidaire. My first paycheck was \$37.00 for a week's pay. I was married to my wife, Eileen, who was in the Royal Air Force in England as a parachute packer during the war. We had a son by then. We spent \$10 a week on groceries and had plenty to eat. The house was a one bedroom that cost \$4,200. Our house in Fairborn did not have running water and we used an outhouse. We had to walk down the street to get water in a two-gallon bucket. We had electricity. The next house we bought was \$92.00 closing cost and the payments were \$62.00 a month with my G.I. Loan.