

# James Krohe, Sr.

## Army Infantry—WO, 42nd Rainbow Division



I went into the Army Infantry on July 26th, 1940 and was stationed at Fort Ord, California as a member of the 7th Infantry Division, which was being re-activated. When the first group of draftees came, in about the month of November, several of us who had our basic training, were transferred to the 3rd Division to bring it to full fighting strength. We joined the 30th Infantry that was stationed at Presidio of San Francisco, which was located near the entrance to the Golden Gate. The veteran I chose to interview for this assignment was my grandfather James Krohe, Sr., who served in World War II as well as the Korean War.

When he was only 18 years old he was drafted into the army to serve in WWII in June 1943. He was attending Western Illinois University at the time. His basic training took place at Fort McClary,

Alabama.

After completion of basic training, my grandfather was sent to North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota for special training called ASTP civil engineering. When the Army needed more infantry soldiers in Europe, he and his fellow classmates were transferred to the 42nd Division in Infantry at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. There he was trained to be a mortar gunner.

Private Krohe was then sent to Europe in December, 1944 with the entire 42nd Division. He was there for 18 months--within that time he travelled through France and Germany in combat. His rank was Private First Class, assigned to Company K, 242nd Infantry Regiment. He was part of two large campaigns and awarded two Bronze Stars for serving in the Central Europe-Rhineland and the Alsace-Ardenne Campaigns. As well as being awarded a Combat Infantry Badge which he is most proud of. When in combat they spent most of their time taking villages and digging foxholes. While serving in Europe he was able to attend one of the USO Shows put on by Bob Hope. My grandpa was discharged from the army in May, 1946, and returned to his hometown in Beardstown, Illinois.

He joined the National Guard in 1947 after getting married and moving to Springfield, Illinois. His rank was Warrant Officer and his job was director of the 44th Infantry Division Band. During the Korean War the National Guard was called on for active duty in 1952-1953. He was stationed in the State of California for 1 year then the state of Washington for one year. His job also included helping decide what band members would go overseas as replacements but he mainly served as the bandleader and conductor of the band. They served primarily as entertainment for dignitaries and troops. While he was in the capacity he was able to see Bob Hope again and this time he met him and played for him.

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Following his service in the Korean War he did not return to school and found employment with the state of Illinois. He continued his career as a musician and band leader with the 33rd Infantry Division Band Illinois National Guard.

The 42nd Rainbow Division of WWII has a reunion once every year that he attends when he can. When I asked my grandpa how his service impacted him, he said it didn't impact him in any way after his service; but he can still remember every detail of his time while in service--even 60 years later. He could even recall walking through the forest and digging a foxhole and having to put branches over it so the enemy could not see the candle light. He and his foxhole buddy, Bill Law, sat with the mortar gun right next to them as they wrote letters to their families. He was lucky enough to return to his family uninjured after proudly serving his country.

Written by Kelsey Slaughter