

Robert B. Kennedy

U.S. Army Patton's 3rd Army



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Served In Patton's 3rd Army

Like tens of thousands of 18 year old guys in 1944, I reported for basic training in the U.S. Army. After eight weeks of basic and five weeks as a light tank crewman, I shipped overseas on the Queen Mary along with 18,000 troops. We took a zig-zag anti-submarine course to Scotland, boarded a blacked-out troop train to South Hampton, England. We loaded onto LSTs to cross the Channel and landed on the beach near Le Harve, France. I was finally delivered to General Patton's Third Army in northern France. We faced Germany across the Mosel River. Metz, France was just behind us. My 6th Cavalry unit was comprised of 12 tanks and 3 armored car troops, about 700 men and officers. Along with the 28th Cavalry Mechanized, we were in support of the 1st Infantry Division.

Within two weeks, the German offensive in the Ardennes forest began. The press called it the Bulge. I remember the cold and the snow. The left flank of the Third Army was set on a forced march to

put a relief column into the Bastogne, Belgium area in the Ardennes forest. The 6th and 28th Cav. received a Presidential Citation in this action. We had advanced through Wiltz by the end of January, 1945 and crossed the Our River into the Saar Valley of Germany. We entered the Rhineland Campaign in support of the 2nd Infantry Division for the remainder of the war. We lost one tank in the Prumm River, crossed the Rhine River at Andernach on March 16, 1945, my 19th birthday.

We kept going southeast into the vast Thuringia forest. We over-ran our first concentration camp at Ohrdruf. As we came into Czechoslovakia, a flood of German troops poured past our columns running from the Russians. We met the Russians at Pilsen. At wars end we had lost 84 KIA and 130 wounded. I had made all ETO campaigns and survived. It was then, that despite all of the death I had witnessed, I was thrown into shock to learn that my only brother, Lt. John F. Kennedy, had been killed in the crash of his Navy fighter plane. Emergency leave returned me state-side to be with my family.

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