

# Albert J. Nardi

## U.S. Army



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Normandy, Northern France and Rhineland Campaigns

Albert J. Nardi joined the U.S. Army on February 12, 1941 and was sent to Camp Custer, Michigan. From there he was sent to Iceland, England, Ireland, France, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and then home to the United States. During the 3 years he served overseas, he earned the following honors and medals: Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, American Defense Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 3 Battle Stars, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign, American Order French Croix DeGuerre, Combat Infantry Man Badge and Three Year Overseas Medal.

Albert writes, "Frank Micheli, Dom Bottino and myself, Al Nardi, joined the Army February 12, 1941, volunteered for one year. Bottino didn't pass the exam. Mitch and I did to our regret. We were stationed at Camp Custer, Michigan. When Mitch

volunteered, he didn't tell headquarters that he had joined the Navy Reserve. When they found out, they (the Navy) came and got him for the Navy. At Fort Custer, it was drill, drill and more drill. It was not long before the Fifth Infantry Division lived up to expectations held by General Lear. On May 20, 1941 the Division received its first opportunity to show what it could do. The Division moved out of Fort Custer, Michigan on a 600 mile march into central Tennessee, where from June 2 to June 28 it was engaged in maneuvers conducted by the Second Army. It was a real test for 5000 selectees in the Division.

The saddest part of my service was that my mother died when I was in Iceland and the Army wouldn't let me come home. I was discharged from the Army on June 17, 1945. I was awarded the Silver Star Medal September 8-10, 1944 near Dormot, France for Gallantry in Action. The Bronze Star Medal was awarded to me for Meritorious Achievement in ground combat against the armed enemy during WW II in the European African Middle Eastern Theater of Operations.

From Iceland, we went to Northern Ireland in May, 1944 for more training and we had to stand inspection for General Patton. From England, we landed in France. Patton gave the order on August 7 to gas up and go. We borrowed transportation from three quartermaster truck companies, loaded as many men as it could hold and started rolling at 2:00 in the afternoon. Four hours and sixty miles later we attacked Angers.

The Fifth Division started moving from the hour it hit the Normandy Coast. We covered 1400 miles in 277 days of combat out of a possible 300 days. We crossed 34 rivers. I guess we just about wrote the book on river crossing. When we landed at Normandy, we marched 16 miles to our assembly and three days later relieved the tired men of the First Division in the Coumont Area. We crossed so many rivers that General Patton said this to us, "You have web feet. To my mind history does not record incidents of greater valor than your assault cross-

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ings on the Saber and the Rhine Rivers. I showed the scene of your glorious exploits to a civilian for whom I have the highest esteem. After looking at it for several times, he said he did not believe there was enough courage in the world to achieve such a victory." Knowing the Fifth Infantry Division, Patton was sure we would achieve it, and we did.

In its final advance across Germany, the 45th Division made a two-day march to the Czechoslovakia border and attacked German pockets of resistance. At the corner of that country, the war ended. I had enough points to be discharged. I was given my separation papers at Fort Sheridan, Illinois on June 17, 1945. I had served 4 years, 4 months and 6 days. War is hell !

Albert J. Nardi  
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