

# Corporal Harold Pankey

Army

26th Infantry Regiment-1st Infantry Division



**Harold Pankey**

**Veterans of Five Campaigns - 1939-1945  
European Theatre: Normandy, France,  
Germany**

Harold Pankey was drafted into the U.S. Army in March 1943 at the age of 21. He spent the next 12 months at Fort Jackson, South Carolina with the 106th Division. After completing his training, Harold arrived in England in April, 1944 and joined the First Infantry Division. His unit landed on Omaha Beach in the third wave on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Harold was wounded in the Battle of the Huertgen Forest and sent back to a hospital to recover.

Corporal Pankey returned to the front again as the Battle of the Bulge was being fought in December and January, 1945. He was wounded the second time in the knee on April 17 during the Rhineland

campaign. He had served in all five European campaigns; Normandy, Northern France, the Ardennes, Central Europe and the Rhineland.

Harold was sent back to the states after the war ended. He was sent to Percy Jones Hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan for extended medical care. He was honorably discharged on October 7, 1945. Harold said there were plans to send his unit to the Pacific, but the war ended and he was more than ready to go home. Among his medals and citations are five Bronze Campaign Stars, two Purple Hearts, The European Theatre Medal, the Good Conduct Ribbon and two Bronze Star Medals.

Harold Pankey  
Elkhart, IL

**Harold Pankey, John Urban at D-Day  
Celebration with WWII Reinactor**



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Harold H. Pankey ELKHART, IL - Harold H. Pankey, 91, passed away on Wednesday, June 11, 2014, at his home in Elkhart. He is survived by his wife, Mary Louise; children: Gene (Joan) Pankey, Larry (Diane) Pankey, Donald (Stephania) Pankey and Deanne (David) Barker; siblings: Ruth (Fritz) Werkman, Gladys Guinn and Nancy Pankey; 12 grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his siblings: Eugene, Inez, Imo, Harland, Edna Maude and Donald. He was born Dec. 30, 1922, in Elkhart, Ill., the son of Eugene and Nancy Jane (Merritt) Pankey. Harold married Mary Louise Baugher on Nov. 11, 1945, in Fancy Prairie at Mary's mother's home by the Rev. Bryan Miller. Harold proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during WWII. Harold was in the 1st Division and was a D Day survivor. He landed on Omaha Beach at Normandy. He returned to Normandy with his wife, Mary, on the 50th anniversary of D Day and reunited with a group of other surviving veterans. He attended Elkhart High School. Harold was a member of the American Legion 616, VFW, WWII Illinois Veterans Memorial Board, and Elkhart United Methodist Church.

### Illinois Veteran & Community



#### Class-

#### room Project 's

#### Interview with Harold Pankey

**Harold** was video interviewed by Reavis High School and their teacher Lauren Heller—Teachers in June , 2008

The raw footage from that interview was submitted and accepted to the US Library of Congress—Veterans History Project archives.

Students from Reavis High School then created a documentary showcasing Harold's personal memories.

That digital documentary can be found at the Illinois Veterans & Community Classroom Project website at <http://ilvets.ltc.k12.il.us/ilvets/VideoGallery/VideoPlayer/tabid/136/VideoId/31/Default.aspx>

*Among the stories that Harold related to the students from Reavis HS students is the following moving story:*

#### **Landing on Omaha Beach & Purple Hearts**

Mr. Pankey's unit landed on Omaha Beach in the 3rd wave during the Normandy invasion on D-Day, June 6, 1944 and also fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was part of the 1st Division, 26th Infantry. Mr. Pankey went on to fight in all five European Campaigns: Normandy, Northern France, the Ardennes, Central Europe, and Rhineland.

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His medals include (2) Purple Hearts, (2) Bronze Stars, European Theatre Medal, Good Conduct, and Combat Infantry Badge.

Purple Heart:



Harold & Toni Leonetti at D-Day Memorial Ceremony, Illinois WWII Memorial. June 6, 2010

