

Carl Rolando

U.S. Army 853rd Ordinance Co. ETO



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I was 21 years old when I entered the U.S. Army at Scott Air Force Base in 1942. After basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and Camp Carson, Colorado, I was assigned to the 853rd Ordinance Company for the duration. I attended the Army Administration School in California, Camp Bowie, Texas and in Tucson, Arizona.

The 853rd Ordinance Company was made up of men primarily from Illinois, Texas, and New York, which led to some intense competition in touch football and softball games during basic training. We sailed on the Queen Elizabeth with 22,000 soldiers aboard, I was told. I can't verify that number as I was seasick for the whole trip to England. We were stationed in Southern England from October 1943 until D-Day and the invasion of the continent.

We landed on Omaha Beach and spent time in the hedgerows of Normandy until we were able to move inland as the armored and infantry cleared the way. Our company was assigned to General Patton's Third Army and moved toward Paris and into Northern France where we were held up outside Metz, France. It was a highly fortified city that required a great deal of bravery on the part of the infantry to capture it, as my friend, Al Nardi will attest.

Our Company was moved north into Belgium where we temporarily joined the 9th Army. We

were again held up at the Battle of the Bulge for about nine days. We got no Christmas presents in 1944 and we think the Germans got them. After we went through Luxembourg and Holland, we crossed into Germany at Aachen. We followed Patton to within striking distance of Berlin where he was kept from going on into Berlin. Moving east, we were at Leipzig when the war ended. That area had been given to Russia by the agreement at Yalta by Roosevelt, and Churchill, so the Russians ran us out.

I received Four Overseas Service bars, the American Campaign Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon, One Silver Battle Star, the Good Conduct Medal and the WW II Victory Medal.

We sailed for home from Marseilles, France on a Dutch ship manned by a Japanese crew. It was a Kaiser built Liberty Ship and there were 506 of us coming home. Again, I was as sick as anyone could be. I was discharged at Camp Grant, Illinois on November 19, 1945 and got home the day before Thanksgiving in 1945.

Carl Rolando
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