

Delbert Spitz

U.S. Army



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I left my hometown of Mendota, Illinois and was inducted into the U.S. Army on July 24, 1943. My training occurred on three Army bases. My unit was the First Engineers Specialty Brigade, 301 Port Company. We were earmarked for the invasion of Europe and shipped out March 24, 1944. For several weeks in Britain I loaded and unloaded supply barges and moved provisions by river and canal to the south of England. We were preparing for the assault on Hitler's "Fortress Europe". In late May we boarded liberty ships and sat out days of bad weather until General Eisenhower could delay the channel crossing no longer. The greatest armada ever assembled in the history of mankind sallied forth to liberate the European continent.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of June 6, 1944, we churned towards Normandy and Utah beach. I went ashore in the second infantry assault wave. Allied bombers filled the skies above us. The U.S.S. Texas, salvaged from the depths of Pearl Harbor, sent a steady stream of fourteen inch shells onto the beach. I said a silent prayer that I would make it and started running as soon as I hit the beach. I reached a 30 foot wall that Rommel had built and was soon unloading supplies. Finally a hand full of heroic demolition experts blew a hole in the wall and the advance from the beach began.

By the time the German Panzer armies reached us the Allied positions were fortified. My Company went about the business of supplying the awesome battle force that had landed in Normandy. Hundreds of liberty ships that had ferried the soldiers across the channel were sunk and used as breakwater for the harbors. In one eight hour period my company set a record for unloading 833 tons of supplies. When Patton's Third Army swarmed out of Normandy, my Company followed and ran supplies to them at the front. When the Bulge started, my Company was broken up and sent into the fight. Patton moved his Third Army one hundred miles north to Bastogne within 72 hours, a feat that everyone believed was impossible.

After that I had several assignments. I helped in an Army hospital and witnessed untold suffering. I was a guard in a prisoner of war camp in Luzon, France. Then, I rode shotgun

on supply trains in France and Belgium. I arrived back in the U.S. on February 22, 1946. If they ever come to get me to fight again, they would have to take my front porch, too. Everyone should say a prayer when they go to bed at night that they won't find themselves in a war in the morning.

Delbert Spitz
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