

WORLD WAR TWO EXPERIENCES OF EDWARD K. DANA RELATED APRIL 2000

FIRST ENLISTMENT JULY 26, 1938; DISCHARGED JULY 25, 1941  
~~2ND. ENLISTMENT MAY 8, 1942 DISCHARGED OCT 24, 1945~~

Edward joined the Army July 26, 1938 eleven days before his 21st. birthday. His dad had to sign the papers for him to join the Army. He had to go to Ft. Douglas, Utah to join. His pay was \$21.00 a month. He said he felt guilty that he was able to eat 3 square meals a day and he knew his family at home didn't have the same. He joined for three years. He spent most of the time in Calif. and Washington. He served in peacetime. He was released July 25, 1941.

He worked at different jobs and got a job working at the Remington Arms Plant when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941. He had been home for ten months when he was drafted in the Army. He was classified 1A, single and trained. He was sent to Ft. Douglas to be inducted for the 2nd. time. He was in training in the States and then sent to the East coast to board a troop ship to be sent to North Africa to fight the Italians and Germans. He was on a troop ship for 2 weeks and sea sick all the time on the boat. He lost weight and strength. Then he was on a small landing craft and landed at Fadel, North Africa. The soldiers had to march to their camp miles away. Some of the ~~men~~ helped carry his army gear for a few miles then they left him to struggle on his own and he finally made it into camp.. The army lost the mens duffle bags that had their bedding in them and the nights are cold in the desert, so their coats had to keep them warm. The desert is very hot during the day. He saw lots of camels dead that had been killed by the ships shelling the area before the landing

Sometimes things are funny in a war zone. He was on guard duty at a metal roofed building where tires were stored. Lots of storks were on the roof clacking their bills.

He threw a rock on the building and it sounded like a cannon shell exployding and the storks took off. He was stationed in Sicily for quiet a while. He said the American soldiers used the local farmers mules and horses to move supplies. They were using a 3year old mule and it wasn't very broke to carry a load. It was loaded down with canned food and ammunition and they were taking the supplies up on a mountian side where 50 or 60 head of cattle was lying down. The mule started bucking and the ropes and blankets broke loose holding the supplies as they didn't have the correct packing equipment. When the cans and ammo scattered and flew every direction it sounded like artillery shells exployding and the noise stampeded the cattle. Because Edward being so tired he sat and laughed for two hours.

Edward was in the Pioneer Platoon (ammunication). His duty was to haul ammo, rations and water to the front battle lines. They were trying to take the supplies thru a safe route but they got out of the safety zone. They got caught out in a grain field and a hilly area when the Germans started shelling the men. Edward and the men were pinned down

lying flat on the ground. The incoming shells mowed the grain down and he and the men had to crawl backwards and shells going over their heads. The Germans couldn't lower the gun barrels or they would of killed the American soldiers in the grain field. They were terribly frightened but got out safely.

He was in Sicily and North Africa until the Itilians and the Germans were defeated there. He was shipped to Bournemouth, England for rest and vacation. They did some ~~trainings~~ <sup>TRAINING</sup>. While he was in England he visited a cousin in Manchester, England for two weeks. her name was Elsie Ratcliff and her brother Leonard. Later they journeyed to America to visit the relatives here.

D-DAY —The ~~Allies~~ <sup>Allies</sup> invasion of northern France June 6, 1944

Edward went in the next day. He landed on Omaha beach. He went in on a landing craft and saw many many men dead on the beach, wrecked boats. The dead men hadn't been picked up yet as the battle was still going on with the Germanys. Big ships about 15 miles out on the ocean was shelling the Germans for 3 days. He said you couldn't get any rest for the noise and excitement of battle.

A quote from the newspaper: June 5, 1994—"Overlord\_ the name given for the invasion, the goal had been to put about 160,000 combat troops with 20,000 vehicles on the Normandy beaches that first day. By the 6th. day the Allies would have 20 divisions. There was 326,000 men and 54,000 vehicles plus 104,000 tons of supplies in France. They were there to stay. From ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> crowded beaches endless columns of men and vehicles fought their way inland on the way to liberation of Europe".

#### Some experiences

Edward was sent out on night patrol on the outside of a little building. The moon was shining and refected light on a artillery piece. ~~Next~~ <sup>Next</sup> morning a German officer and 5 men came out of that building and Surrendered. A short distance from this building was a small vineyard where Edward and his Battalion was dug in. They had dug fox holes. The Germanys made an artillery attact and shelled the place—ploughed it up. He said he was lucky he didn't get killed.

To gather the dead a small trailers were pulled by trucks and the dead was tossed in them. He saw two big piles of dead German soldiers ~~stacked~~ <sup>stacked</sup> on top of one another as high as they could be thrown..Probably 500 to a pile. They had blue uniforms on. He saw a group of German soldiers caught out on a hillside dead. They had worn Sam Brown belts. It was hot July weather and they were so bloated their stomachs almost burst, tongues hanging out and the putrid stink of dead.

In Belgium we found a 40 or 50 acre of ground covered with about 3 or 4,000 dead German soldiers that had got caught out in the open and were trying to retreat/ We stripped them of their rings, watches, and medals. I had a German Iron Cross medal, one of the highest medals of war, and was showing it to some buddies. I turned my head and one

of them stole it from me. They denied taking it. It would of been a chosen war trophy if I had got it home.

The Germans used horses and wagons to haul they supplies. The Americans had captured a lot of germans and supply wagons. Because I had been a farm hand and knew horses they sent for me to help unhitch the horses from the wagons. The one horse was dead and its mate was shaking from being shell shocked. We gave several beautiful horses to some Belgian farmers. They were sure happy to get the horses for their own use.

There was two Belgium farmers trying to take the boots off a dead German soldier and he was so stiff they had a hard time. ~~He~~ I even cut his finger off to get his ring. Brought it home but it is lost now.

The GERMANS had retreated and we helped liberate thousands of French people. They were lined up on the street. They were hugging, and kissing the American G.I.s. Some big 250 or 300 # woman grabbed me and about smothered me with her kisses.

Now back to the battle fields: He said he ~~saw~~ <sup>saw</sup> a pretty young girl dead beside her motor cycle. He saw lots and lots of dead. Bombed out cities, country, forests and buildings. The war was coming to an end and the Germans on retreat. He was on guard duty and he heard a noise in a bunch of trees; He woke his commanding officer up and told him about the noise. The officer said "forget it". The American soldiers were sleeping out on the hillside in the open not in foxholes. Next morning a G.I. went over to the trees to relieve himself and run into a company of 200 German soldiers and they surrendered to the soldier. They could of shot the Americans but maybe they were ~~glad~~ <sup>glad</sup> the war was coming to an end.

He was in a big chateau in Germany. Inside there was a large table stacked with big warm loaves of black bread. Still warm when the Germans were being shot at and they escaped in a hurry. ~~He~~ didn't eat any as he didn't know if ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> was laced with poison or not.

Edward said they were in a hilly area when 16 German planes came in and strafed them. There happened to be lot of previously dug fox holes and the men jumped in the holes two or three men to a hole. He remembered the black men looked white as us because of fright. He survived that nightmare. Many times they had dug foxholes then got the orders to move out and dig another hole. Sometimes they dug holes many times in a day. We captured a bunker from the Germans and it had 12 beds in it. The Germans counter attack with artillery and it got a direct hit. We had 3 shell shocked men in and they really went crazy with fright. They all survived and got out.

Germany;; The officer in command sent Edwards squad(12 men in a squad) back to a Ammo dump to get ammo to take to the men on the front line. The Germans shelled them with mortar shells There were fox holes dug and the men jumped in. They had all kinds of ammo hanging on them. Then the officer told them to try again. He wouldn't listen to Edward telling him not to go the same way but the officer <sup>didn't</sup> listen. They started again to go the same route and the Germans started shelling them again. Edward jumped in a fox hole. When the shelling stoped he got out of the hole he never saw any american soldiers around. He never saw any of his comrades again. He was the only one of 12 men who finished the job of getting supplies to the frontlines.

He said he was nervous as hell when he heard a big racket and thought the Germans had captured him. He was relieved to find out two crows were squaking and fighting. Another time he was in a foxhole that has branches and dirt on top to give more protection. He called over to a buddy in another foxhole to come over and play cards with him.. The guy did and just got in the foxhole with Edward when a mortar shell came in and made a direct hit on the foxhole the soldier had just left. Saved.

6.

In Aachen, Germany they occupied a small house with everything intact. Edward played a wind up phonograph that played pretty tunes. The British started a bombing raid in the area. The concussion from the bombs was so bad the men upstairs couldn't get down. The house really shook. A big bomb crater was made about 100 feet from the house. The hole was big enough to put a house in it. A milk cow was close by and wasn't hurt or killed. He said it probably was a 500 # bomb. They survived that attack. He was in the Hurtgen forest helping to build a Headquarters. He was standing on a down tree chopping branches off when a mortar shell came in and exploded and a piece of shrapnel hit him in the lower part of his left leg. A foot soldier had to walk so he had a "million dollar" wound to get him out of the war. He had to wait a few hours for a jeep to take him to a field hospital. The road they had to travel on was being shelled but they got through without being hit. This happened Nov. 22, 1944. He stayed in the field hospital 4 days. He was put on a plane and flown to Belgium for 3 or 4 days before he had to be operated on to remove the shrapnel. He was then flown to Paris, France. He got to see the Eiffel Tower from the hospital. He also saw Buzz bombs flying over the city. He was in that hospital for 12 days. Beside the wound he had Battle Fatigue. He said he was in the Scio. ward for 2 weeks for rest and recuperation. He also saw Oxford Univ. He was put on a ship to come home. The ship came by way of the Brumada. He was in Calif. for a few days and sent home to Ogden, Ut. on May 20, 1945. He was put on convalescent leave for about 5 months. He was Honorably Discharged Oct. 24, 1945. You can see war movies and see battle action but the movies can't capture the personal feeling on film, Fright, fatigue & horrors of battle. He survived many battles. He has received the Purple Heart, Bronze Star for gallantry in action. The medal of Valor for valor in action. Combat Infantry Badge. A ribbon with 6 stars representing 6 major campaigns. He served 3½ years. Mostly on training and on the battle fields.

Edward has said many times " I've been to different parts of the world and there is no place like AMERICA. He loves his country and the American Flag that he was called to defend".

TYPED BY SHIRLEY DANA MAY 2, 2000

*Plenty mistakes in typing*  
*Edward K. Dana*

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