

Writings of Ray Bones

During the War 1943 - 1944

Written in 2002 - 2003

In February of 1943, a friend of mine, Jack Kellow, received his draft notice from his friends and neighbors to join the service in the defense of his country. My name was about to come up also, so I just went with Jack.

We got on the train in Portland and wound up in Fort Lewis. That is the last I saw of my friend, Jack, until the war ended.

The next day I was on the train headed for Camp Roberts, California. I took infantry training.

In June, I was back on the train to Camp Polk, Louisiana. The 88th Infantry Division was on maneuvers, and they needed some replacements. They put us on trucks and hauled us around to the infantry regiments, and thank the Lord they didn't need any replacements. They were next to the Combat Engineers, and they needed replacements.

I asked where the latrine was. Someone pointed. When I got there, I saw a shovel full of dirt coming out of a hole, and here was a master Sgt. pitching dirt out of that hole. I wondered how in the world a Master Sgt. got into that fix. . . . I discovered he had gone AWOL.

I was assigned to Headquarters & Service Company. I must say I was awfully lucky. Company A, B, and C were line companies laying and picking up mine fields, building roads and bridges, and going with the infantry with flame throwers.

When the maneuvers ended they sent us to Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio, Texas. But one day they landed us on the train, and we wound up in Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia (next to Norfolk). They loaded us on a Liberty one evening. The next morning we got in a convoy of 87 ships. We had no idea where we were headed, but 17 days later we landed in Casablanca, North Africa. We spent New Year's of '44 in North Africa. Our troops trained there for a couple of months. Then they hauled us to _____ and put us on an old English cattle boat across the Mediterranean Sea to Naples, Italy. We hit a bad storm. I was terribly sea sick. The old English colonial said, "Top side, Soldier."

I said, "Sir, I don't believe I'll participate."

Then he got all bent out of shape, and in his deepest voice said, "Boat drill!" And I talked to him all the way up to the top deck.

We unloaded on the sides of sunken ships in Casablanca and Naples.

I was walking down the street in Naples, Italy, and I met Mrs. Seavey, my typing teacher from Nestucca. She outranked me. She was the personal secretary to the commanding General of that theater of operations.

Battle stars:

Rome - ARNO
N. Apennines
Po Valley