

## Merle Eng's Trip in the Army 5/44 – 11/45 (September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007)

Drafted into Army, May 1944, sent in Fort Snelling. Sent to Fort Hood where I took basic training. Went home for furlough after basic. In June when the invasion took place, we made remarks we wouldn't go over seas, we thought the war was over. Went overseas, was 21 days going over.

Landed in North Africa and stayed one day. Got on an English boat and headed for Italy. Had breakfast on board ship the first morning there were maggots in our food. Landed in Italy, had Thanksgiving Day on land, we were in camp on farm that belonged to the son in law of Mussolini. We lived around that area for a while. We headed north to a camp.

One day we got our call to move out, we were with our packs which were loaded with lots of stuff. Our first stop was a potato patch, the enemy started to fire on us with 88's. It didn't take long and the potatoes were all dug. On invasion day we were on field work at Fort Hood (June 1945). When we moved from the potato patch, most of our back packs were left behind. We kept pushing the enemy. We traveled north in Italy.

When reached Po River to help move troops across the Po River. All we had was some enemy boats that had been left by the enemy. We loaded the boats then proceeded to row across the river. The water was shallow in the middle of the river. When we got across the men got out and we went back to the other side the water was so swift the boat would drift down stream about 1 block, the boat had a long rope on it and we used it to pull the boat back to the other shore and then we would load up and do it all over. I was in charge of our boat. I received an award for this. On the north side of the river the enemy was bombing and using all types of artillery to try to stop us. But we kept them on the move. It was like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks display. We kept moving north.

The war ended when we were to the border. I was on guard in a one man submarine, no one else was around there. We worked our way back south. The 10<sup>th</sup> was destined to go to the states for a furlough and more training. We were scheduled to be the first troops to invade the Japanese Harbor. Headed for home, President died while we were on the way home. When our furlough ended we reported to Camp Carson. They sent us home again. Then we reported back to Camp Carson for our discharge. I received some articles with my discharge. Bronze Star Medal, World War II Victory Ribbon, E.A.M.E. Ribbon with 2 Bronze Survivor Stars, Good Conduct Ribbon, Combat Infantry Badge.