



**Carl
Heckmann**
Army

Carl Heckmann

Feb 1, 1917 - Jun 10, 2016

BIRTHPLACE: Abilene, Texas

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Colonel

DIVISION: Army, 79th Infantry Division

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

HONORED BY: Son, Mark Heckmann

BIOGRAPHY

Carl A. Heckmann served as a Chaplain with the 314th Regiment of the 79th Infantry Division in the European Theater of Operations. He landed in France at Utah Beach at Normandy on June 17, 1944. He was wounded in action on September 22, 1944, during combat at the Meurthe River in northeastern France and subsequently received the Silver Star, Purple Heart and Presidential Unit Citation. The 79th Division's award of the Silver Star stated: 'When an urgent call for litter bearers was received at a battalion aid station, Chaplain Heckmann, knowing of the vital need for litter bearers, volunteered his assistance. Although the only route to the wounded men led over open terrain subjected to enemy observation and intense fire, Chaplain Heckmann made repeated trips evacuating the casualties until he was caught in the enemy fire and severely wounded.' After recovering from his wounds, he returned to the 79th Division in December 1944. The 79th crossed the Rhone on March 25, 1945, and fought in the Ruhr Valley of Germany until the division's last day of combat in April 1945. Chaplain Heckmann continued serving with the 79th after V-E day as it fulfilled duties as part of the Army of Occupation in Czechoslovakia and Germany. He returned home to his wife, Pearl, in December 1945. The 79th Infantry Division served under the First, Third, Seventh and Ninth U.S. Armies in World War II. Chaplain Heckmann was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and was recognized for participation in the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe campaigns. Postwar, he continued his career as a Lutheran minister in Navasota, followed by Eden and Austin, all in Texas. He served 15 years as president of the Texas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He also served in the U.S. Air Force Reserves from 1948 to 1975, rising to the rank of Colonel.