



# Austin Fernald

Feb 13, 1923 -

**BIRTHPLACE:** Los Angeles, California

## SOLDIER DETAILS

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**DIVISION:** Army, 400th AAA AW Battalion

**THEATER OF OPERATION:** European

**SERVED:** Jan 22, 1943 - Oct 24, 1945

**HONORED BY:** Wife, Anita A. Fernald and children

## BIOGRAPHY

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Austin Bertram Fernald's... SR 'Bert' story: I was sworn into the U.S. Army on January 22, 1943. I was taken by bus to Camp Anza, Riverside, California, for testing. I then took a train to Fort Eustis Virginia, for training on a 40 mm gun (antiaircraft gun). I then took a train to Camp Pickett, Virginia. I joined the 400th. AAA AW Battalion, which was attached to the 45th division. We shipped overseas June 8, 1943. We made a practice landing by Oran, North Africa. We got back on the ship and made the Invasion of Sicily. I landed at Scoglitti, Sicily. Battery 'C' was attached to the 3rd, Battalion, 180th. Infantry, 45th Division. In Corsica our Battalion was transferred to the 31st. AAA Brigade. While going over seas my 40 Mm Gun was mounted on the ship's deck, port side so we could practice firing our gun. When we made an Assault landing at Scoglitti, Sicily, there was a sandbar about 100 yards out. We pulled our gun on to the sandbar and left it there, and waded ashore, with the rifles overhead. Later on a duck I pulled my gun from the sandbar to the beach, and we began firing our gun. My second Lt. was killed, landing in front of a machine gun nest on the beach. One of my gun crew members was killed by a strafing German plane on the beach. After the Sicilian campaign, we loaded onto an LST, made an assault landing at Paestum, Italy. We then traveled up Italy, to Mt. Casino. I was combat wounded on October 23, 1943, outside of Mt. Casino, Italy. I was evacuated to the 95th Evacuation Hospital in Naples, Italy. I was awarded the Purple Heart Medal No. 178817. We went to Corsica. Later on we boarded a LST and went into Southern France. Then we traveled up to Mets, France. Later on we turned in our guns, and started guarding German POWs. We then went to Chartres, France, and started guarding German POWs at a Prison War Camp. Later on we went to Brussels, Belgium and worked as military MPs. When the war ended, I had 88 points, so then I went to Le Havre, France, and stayed in Camp Lucky Strike. I boarded the ship William T Barry, sailed home Oct. 3, 1945. I was discharged at Fort MacArthur California October 24, 1945. I have gone back to Europe twice, and placed flowers on my buddies graves that were in the 400th, that are still buried there. Most of my buddies were returned to the states for internment. Placing flowers on their graves was something I always wanted to do, to let them know they have not been forgotten. The Television History Channel came to my house, and interviewed me for the Patton 360 Television Show in 2009.

Part of my interview was in The Series Baptism of Blood, The Invasion of Sicily, in July 1943.