



**Melvin
Berry**
Army

Melvin Berry

Jan 18, 1925 -

BIRTHPLACE: Hunter, KS

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: PFC

DIVISION: Army, 137th Regiment of 35th Infantry
Division, 5th Division Band

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

HONORED BY: The Berry Family

BIOGRAPHY

Melvin Berry was born in Hunter, KS, on the homestead farm of his mother's family. He attended a country school near-by for eight years, then graduated high school from Hunter High School in 1944. Berry was nineteen years old when he was drafted into the service. He went to Fort Leavenworth to be commissioned and took his Army training in Camp Croft, SC. Four months later, March 23, 1945, he was on the USS Weigel headed overseas. After a twelve day journey, he arrived in LeHavre, France. Berry traveled from France, to Holland, Belgium and Germany with his unit. He was suppose to cross the Remagen Bridge over the Rhine River, but the Germans had blown it up to keep Americans away. A pontoon bridge was built by Americans, in its place. Berry has a piece of the original bridge. Berry's regular job was guard duty, setting up road blocks, and delivering supplies. He only experienced combat conditions a few times. At one point of his tour, he camped near Dachau concentration camp and saw the trains that brought in the Jewish people to the camp. After the Germans surrendered on May 5, 1945, Berry, a PFC rifleman was transferred to the 5th infantry division band. This band was put in place to proceed General Eisenhower into towns or military camps. Berry was fortunate to see General Eisenhower but did not get to meet him. August 1945, Berry returned to the US on the USS Crystal. He remembers the excitement to see the Statue of Liberty as he sailed into the New York City harbor. Berry played in several victory parades including one in New York City. After a furlough, Berry went to Fort Campbell in Kentucky, to prepare to go to Japan, but the bombs were dropped and he did not have to join the occupation forces. Berry remained at Fort Campbell until he was released from the Army. Berry wrote his mother and future wife letters while in the service. They had a code devised before he had left home so he could let them know where he was. The Army censored all mail and often cut or blacked out parts of letters. Their code involved certain letters of words to reveal the name of his location. Berry was discharges August 1, 1946 coming to Salina, KS. on the train. From there he hitched a ride with a US postal carrier to Hunter, KS. Berry returned to farm the family homestead place, married Iva Mae and started a family.