



Paul Gerig

BIRTHPLACE: Wainwright, Oklahoma

SOLDIER DETAILS

DIVISION: Army, Battery B 377th AAA (AW)
Battalion

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Aug 28, 1942 - Nov 20, 1945

HONORED BY: Michelle Duncan - Granddaughter

BIOGRAPHY

The following is an account of what my grandfather was doing on D-day: 'Well, the day finally arrived. We loaded the trucks, hooked up the guns, we were on alert so we knew something big was about to happen and it did!! D-day on Utah Beach on the Normandy Coast of France....We came to Utah Beach where there were a lot of ships sunk in the water but we had cleared out channels to make it to shore. They opened the front doors and we drove out on the beach to an area away from the water to wait for our connection with the 4th Infantry Division, which we were to be attached to and our battery was to guard 20th Field artillery which were 155 Howitzers. As it got dark the German planes began to fly over, we were instructed not to fire on them unless our area was being attacked. We were only a few miles from the beach and it was quite a display of fire works going on there. All the tracers going in to the air looked like a long fountain boiling up. The night was quiet for a little while except for some artillery firing and occasional rifle or machine gun fire. Then a lone plane came flying over, I guess he wanted to get rid of his load in a hurry and get out of the area for the next thing I heard was a quick whoosh a bang went off on the other side of the hedgerow, throwing dirt and rock all around us. Boy, that sure livened us up and put some pep into our fox hole digging. It wasn't very long until another plane came flying but higher up. The 90mm guns started firing at it and soon a burst set the plane on fire. If you don't think looking up in the sky at night and seeing a big ball of fire coming down on you won't get you on the move...it does!!! I dove into a fox hole and two more bodies landed on top of me. The plane crashed a couple hundred yards away from me. So much for my first night on French soil.'

Battery B 377th Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion -was linked with the 4th Infantry. Decorations and Campaigns: Normandy GO 33 WD 45, Rhineland Ardennes GO 40 WD 45, Northern France GO 46 WD 45 and Central Europe GO 48 WD 45 Decorations and Citations: Good Conduct Medal, EAME Theater Ribbon and One Silver Service Star, World War II Victory Ribbon, Purple Heart GO 15 Hq 171st Sta Hosp 44, and American Theater Ribbon. Honorably Discharged and determined to be 10% disabled due to a gunshot wound of thigh. Wound received EAME Theater 29 July 44.