

Steve Skroback of Company C WWII Memories with the 167th

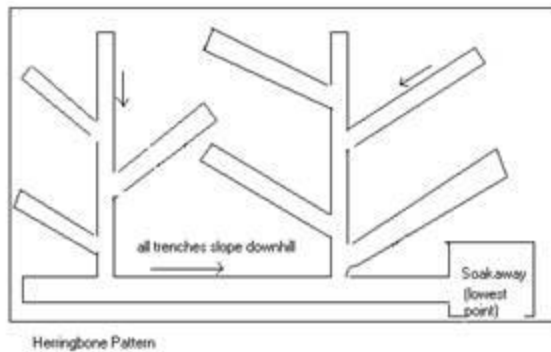
This is written on July 25, 2010. I'm 91 years old - going on 92 here pretty quick. I currently live in a small town in Indiana and I'm still driving here and there. I try to keep the drives pretty short. I just sold my house and will have to make up my mind where I want to move pretty soon. I have a daughter in Mesquite, Texas and a son in South Carolina. I'd like to be closer to both of them. I just don't know which way I should head. I have a cousin down in Florida that says I should try it down there. We'll just have to see. I will miss the friends I have here in Indiana but I suspect I'll make some new friends where ever I end up going.

I have been living alone in a 3 bedroom house since the passing of my wife just before Christmas of 2009. We would've been married 69 years this July 3rd. As you can imagine it is a bit lonely without her. I am a first generation American. My parents and grand parents were from Slovakia. We can trace our genealogy back quite a few years.

I was only with the 167th for about 15 months. that was long enough to participate in crossing the Rhine river and pushing on into central Germany. I was called to service and was training as a demo specialist at Fort Leonardwood, Missouri when they pulled me out of demo training - gave me a little infantry training and sent me off to France. I traveled on the Queen Mary to Glasgow. There I took a train to the other side of England and crossed the channel to France. Within a few days I was on a river getting shelled at, shot at and strafed on the Rhine. It all happened pretty fast.

In the next 15 months, I went from Pfc to Corporal to Sergeant. I never fired a shot at an enemy man. Not because I refused to - just because I was not in a position that I ever needed to.

One time Lt. Peterson asked me and another fella to dig a herringbone ditch drain along side the road. A herringbone system is suited to shallow one way slopes that fall naturally towards a main drain and can be laid to a reasonably regular pattern to provide broad area drainage. The two of us were digging away when suddenly a jeep came careening down the road, horn blowing and dust flying. "*Hop in! Quick!*" the driver called. "*You guys are 2 miles behind enemy lines.*" We scrambled aboard and that project didn't get finished. At least not by us.



I remember a fellow that drove jeeps in Company C. We called him Pop because he was older than the rest of us. He drove a taxi in Chicago before the war. And I remember some buddies named Charlie Franz, George Smedinghoff and a fella by the name of Stefanu.

I have two bronze stars from my time with the 167th. And I count myself as lucky. I stayed in Germany for about 15 months after the war. I was offered a job teaching how to build M4 bridges but I turned it down. I look back sometimes and wonder how differently things might have turned out if I'd taken the job. I imagine I would've ended up over in Korea.

As it was, I took a job with a company called Johns Manville and ended up working for them for 40 years. Johns Manville is one of the nation's leading manufacturers of fiber glass, asbestos-cement pipe and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe.

I have a scrap book that I've made of my WWII experiences. I have all kinds of photos and postcards and letters in it. I sincerely wish I could come to the reunion in 2010. However, I had a bad fall and hit my head pretty hard on the edge of the bath. The resulting injury resulted in a surgery and 100 days in the hospital. So, it looks like I won't be coming to the reunion.

I did however have a nice chat recently with George Smedinghoff's widow, Aline. George passed on about 7 or 8 years ago. She lives not too far from me. I'm going to try to take my photo collection over to let her see them. I'm sure George is in some of the pictures.

To all of the 167th, this is Steve Skroback signing off. For now. If I happen to remember anything more, I'll send it on along. If you remember me - my address (for the time being) is:

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