

The combat stories of **BERT K. ROGERS**

Dates in Service: April 16, 1943- April 30, 1945

Branch of Service: Army

Unit: 5th Infantry Division, 46th Field Artillery
Battalion

Battles/Campaigns: Metz and Battle of the Bulge

Location: England, France, & Germany

Highest Rank: Private First Class

Wounded?: Once

Bert Rogers recalls his time in the 5th
Infantry Division conducting land surveys
for artillery units, and the wound he received
as a result of a mortar shell.

These stories were compiled by an interviewer, who prefers to remain anonymous, and goes by the nickname 'Kilroy Was Here.' These stories are posted through a partnership between 'Kilroy Was Here' and the Witness to War Foundation. Permission to use any of these materials must be granted by 'Kilroy Was Here,' which can be obtained through the Witness to War Foundation.



To start out with, I would like to say that I was the most uninformed man in the Army. I remember saying when I heard that Patton had taken over the 5th, I asked “Who in the hell was he and who cares?” I had come to the 5th as a replacement while they were in England and was assigned to the 46th Field Artillery Battalion.

The nearest town to our camp was called Galway Bay. One day, a guy who I had met in camp decided we wanted to go to Belfast, so we stopped to get directions at a small store that was run by this guy who I would say must have been 23. I asked how to get to Belfast and if he could tell us about the town. Looking up at us he said, “My father has never been, nor had his grandfather or even his grandfather’s father,” and that he has had no reason to go himself.

Three days before actually going over to France, we made two other trips to the docks. Each time we passed a group of civilians, they would yell out DRY RUN, DRY RUN. I guess they were more informed than we were.

The day we actually made it down to the docks to board a ship, the docks were full of men and equipment being loaded on ships of all sizes. The day we left England, the Channel was very rough and waves were crashing over the front of our ship wetting everyone on the decks with cold water. If that wasn’t bad enough, most of the boys were seasick too. The day we arrived off Utah Beach, the Channel was still rough which made



climbing down the nets over the sides of the ship a job in itself. As we made our way down the net, we were bounced against the side of the ship. A number of guys fell into the water and were pinned between the ship and landing craft, causing a number of them to have broken arms and legs.

As our craft made its way to the beach, the Germans were still shelling us even though they had been pushed inland. There were a number of times as we made our way to shore that a wall of water filled the sky around us. After landing and cleaning our equipment, we started inland and along the lines of burnt German equipment on the side of the roads. There were a number of small villages and towns we passed through that had been reduced to just a pile of rubble.

During the daytime American bombers would fill the skies heading for their targets. My duty called for me to arrive before our artillery unit and survey the area where they were to set up using aerial photos I was provided with. My survey would give the artillery information on how far the next towns, fields, and woods were to give fire support to our infantry. The other boys with me were part of the forward observers and would lay the phone line from their post back to the CP.

Just outside of Metz, we ran short of gas and ammo and were down to only firing three rounds a day. It was



while here one foggy morning that the Germans were shelling us, and we couldn't see where it was coming from so they called me up to take what was called an aim circle reading. To do this, I had to go out into the field of fire and set up while under fire. After taking a quick reading, it was sent back to the CP.

The day I was wounded a boy who was with me had his bayonet on his side. The shell came in and exploded near us. The shrapnel hit the blade of his bayonet, but I wasn't as lucky. I was hit in my left leg and hip. For the next eight months, I was in the hospital recovering from my wounds. It was during my stay in there I learned that FDR had died.