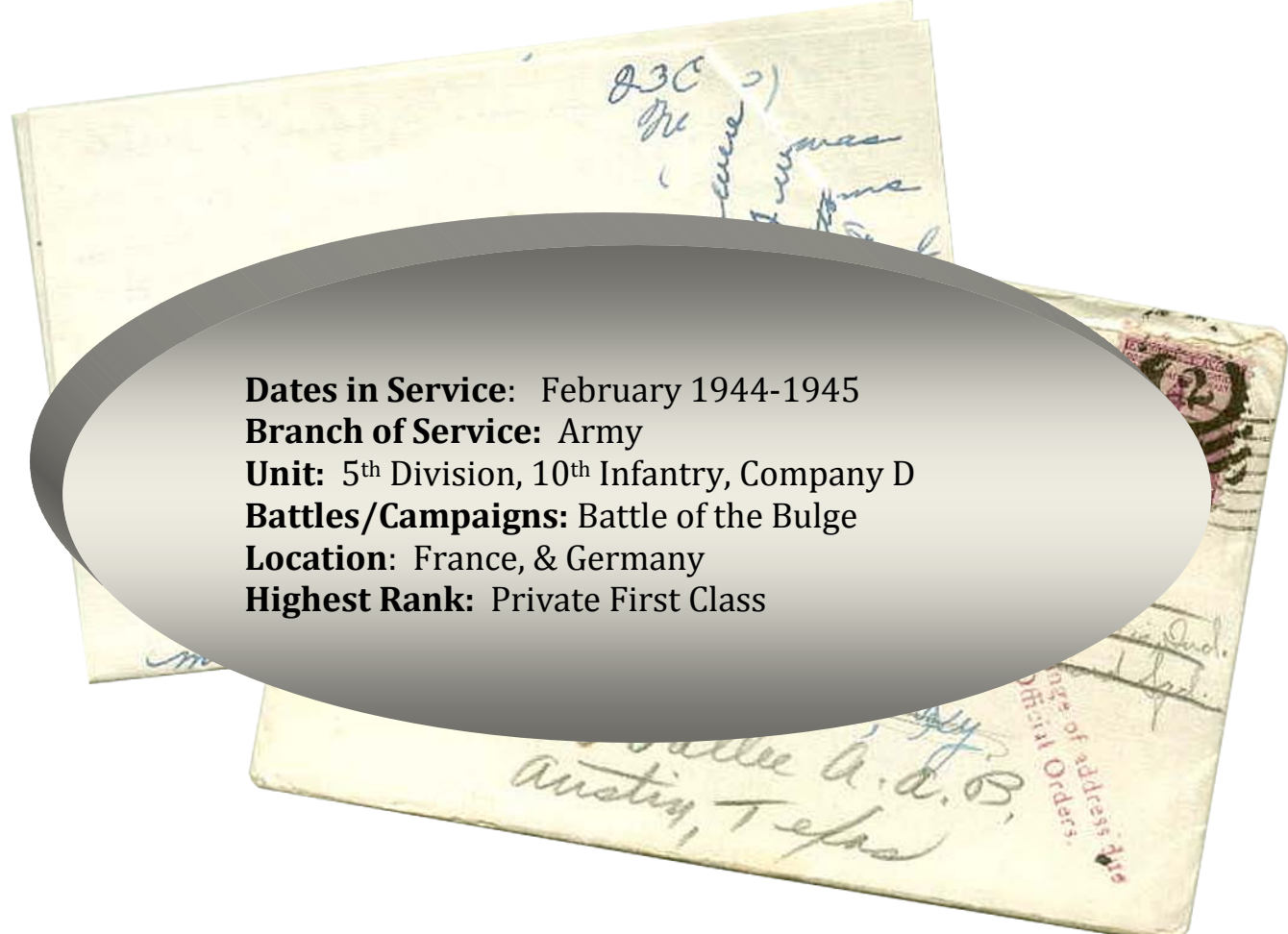


The combat stories of **KENNETH ALLEN**



Dates in Service: February 1944-1945
Branch of Service: Army
Unit: 5th Division, 10th Infantry, Company D
Battles/Campaigns: Battle of the Bulge
Location: France, & Germany
Highest Rank: Private First Class

Kenneth Allen, as a replacement in the 5th Division, became part of a mortar squad on the front lines, going head-to-head with the Germans.

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.



I landed at the port of Marseille in southern France along with a Merchant ship loaded with the other replacements on December 23, 1944. After getting ashore, I was taken to a staging area where at 2:30 on the morning of the 24th, I was woken up and given my Christmas dinner. No sooner had I finished eating than I, along with a number of the other boys, was told to be packed and loaded onto the backs of waiting trucks. We rode until daybreak and pulled onto an airfield where a number of C-47 transport planes sat. They loaded 24 of us to a plane, and we were flown to an airfield next to some old French barracks, where I spent the night.

The following day I was moved closer to the front lines and was told to bed down along with a number of other placements who flew in with me. It turned out to be one of the coldest nights I had ever spent outside. After getting very little sleep, I was awoken on the 26th and once again moved closer to the front. This time, we were moved to a building where I, along with the other replacements, was told to wait. It wasn't long before some officers came in and picked a number of boys from the group of us, and I was picked along with four others to be replacements for the 5th Division and placed in company D in the mortar squad.

That morning was foggy and the ground was covered with snow, and talk about being cold, I mean really cold. It was 15 below zero and if that wasn't bad enough, the Germans shelled us most of that day.



Our 81mm ammo had gotten so low, we were told only use 18 rounds a day. The day was spent sitting as low as one could in a hole and if you had to move, you did it by jumping from hole to hole. The tree bursts were the worst thing to deal with.

By the end of January, the Germans fell back and we received orders to cross the river at night. That night, the moon was out and as bright as day. As we made our way across I kept thinking to myself, “The Germans will open up on us any minute now,” but it never came. On the other side we made our way to some bushes that ran alongside a small lane that led into the town. A boy who was no more than 15 to 20 feet from me had stuck his head through the bushes to see if there were any Germans and as he did some Germans who were standing there grabbed him.

Later on we took a hill in the pouring rain and as we settled in, the Germans counterattacked with a shelling. A boy by the name of Harold and I jumped into a nearby ditch that ran along the lane, and as we lay there, a mortar round landed on top of the ditch beside us. With a weak shaky hand, I reached up and touched the mortar round, and as I drew it back, I told Harold to move back, as I was crawling backwards as fast as I could.