



**William
Joyce**
Army

William Joyce

Nov 22, 1925 -

BIRTHPLACE: Stokes County, North Carolina

SOLDIER DETAILS

**DIVISION: Army, 1476 Engineers Maintenance
Company**

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Apr 13, 1944 - May 7, 1946

**HONORED BY: Wife, Frankie Joyce; Children:
Sandra, Kim & Laura**

BIOGRAPHY

I had to register for service in November 1943 when I turned 18 years old. I was working in Newport News, Virginia putting water systems in the belly of new ships going to war when I got notice to go to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for induction on 4/13/1944 at age 18. We were fitted for uniforms and all gear we would need and several days later shipped to Camp Swift, Texas for basic training (I was assigned to 1258 Combat Engineer). We learned to march, dig fox holes, shooting on rifle range with issued rifles, bivouacked over night in pup tents, obstacle courses and crawling under barbed wire under rifle fire. Weekends were free to rest and write home. After several months in Texas heat, I was sent to Omaha, Nebraska for Automotive Mechanic School for three months. After finishing school I was sent back to Camp Swift, Texas and transferred to 1476 Engineers Maintenance Company. From there, I was shipped to Boston Massachusetts and boarded a troop ship leaving the US on 2/7/45 and arrived in South Hampton, England on 2/16/45, seasick all the way. I was in England for two months and lived in a tent city with cold rain and mud. We were all wondering what was coming next, and if we would be sent into battle. I left there and crossed the English Channel to LeHarve, France where very little homes, business or anything was left standing. We picked up equipment here (trucks, Jeeps, etc.). It was February, very cold and wet and had to live in tents with a lot of the men becoming ill. Leaving LeHarve, we traveled by truck through Belgium and Holland into Germany. We saw many dead cows and horses in this area and we thought the German army killed them so the villagers could not use them for food or work. It took days to cover the distance and we lived on the trucks. In Germany our company occupied a big warehouse building thought to have been used by the German army. We stayed there until the war ended in Germany. We were then moved to Camp Camel, France near the Mediterranean Sea. We just 'hung out,' waiting for a ship to carry us somewhere in the South Pacific. While we were waiting, the war in Japan ended and we were sent back to the US from Marseille, France across the Mediterranean Sea through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Atlantic. We arrived September 9, 1945 and I was sick again for the whole 9 day trip. I was overseas for seven

months. When we got back to the US I got a 45-day furlough and came home by bus. My furlough was soon over and another soldier and I drove back in his 1934 Ford to Camp White, Oregon near Medford, Oregon. Not too long after that I got another 45-day furlough so another soldier from Knoxville, Tennessee and I decided to hitchhike home. We got two different rides as far as Flagstaff, Arizona then we decided to catch a bus the rest of the way home. I got married to Annie Mae Simmons and it was another awfully short 45 days. I got back to Camp White, Oregon and a detachment of men were sent to Fort Ord, California to prepare a field for B-25 and B-29 bombers to be parked as they came back from over seas. After this assignment was finished we went back to Camp White. I was assigned to dispatch 10 trucks at a time every 15 minutes. It took about four hours to get them all on the road. We were escorted through Portland, Oregon by police on our way to Fort Lewis, Washington. I stayed at Fort Lewis until I was sent back to Fort Bragg, North Carolina to be discharged on May 7, 1946. I never had to see battle, and I am very thankful for that, but it was an experience I will never forget.