



**Carl
Otto**
Army

Carl Otto

Feb 21, 1926 -

BIRTHPLACE: Pierce, NE

SOLDIER DETAILS

DIVISION: Army, 94th Signal Corp

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

BATTLE: Battle of the Bulge

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

Carl "Chick" Otto was born in Peirce, NE, attended school there until his junior year. At that time he took a test with the Senior boys and passed. Otto enlisted and requested the Navy but he as placed in the Army. Growing up Otto knew Johnny Carson who grew up in the same town. Otto was stationed in Europe as part of an Infantry squad but was transferred to the 94th Signal Battalion. Otto's job was to help install lines that kept the communication going for the allied forces. His specifically was a pole climber. On one occasion, Otto climbed over a fallen bridge that was knocked down, to save time and material. He carried the phone lines with him and met his unit on the other side after they walked several miles to find a crossing over the river. Otto was stationed in Europe near the end of 1944. He arrived in Bastogne as the Battle of the Bulge was beginning. Excerpts from his book: Remembering World War II by Carl Otto. "We crossed the channel on landing barges, I recall it was dark when we loaded but it was daylight when we landed. I recall that when I reached the end of the dropped door of the barge the wave of water was coming back down the beach and I waited unit it reached the door before I stepped off. The weather was already beginning to get very cold and I did no want to get my feet wet. The snow was beginning to fall when we were loaded onto forty-and eights. (Boxcars designed for forty men or eight horses) We landed in the city of LeHarve, France but we headed northeast toward Bastogne into the teeth of one of the worst blizzards ever to hit Europe." "Each car was assigned one Officer and we had a young Second Lt. who looked like he was not a day older than me, and he appeared to me to be scared to death. All of us had dug into our duffle bags and put on all of the extra clothing we could force ourselves into and were wrapped with our blankets and pup-tent around our sleeping bag. But the snow was blowing into the boxcar through the cracks and of course we were packed too tight to even think of starting a fire." I was located right next to our young Officer in charge and we were visiting as we tried to stay warm. He was a small man too. Then we had an idea. He said "You know, if you would slip your sleeping bag inside my sleeping bag and then both of us got in the combined bags we might be able to get warm." I did not hesitate a minute; we put the bags together and I scooted in with him; we were both fully dressed- boots and all, and although it was a snug fit, there was room for both of us. We were soon warm enough that we both fell a sleep. We

awaken amid a few jeering jibes about sleeping together but some older guy said, "Okay you guys; knock it off. We all know they were the only two in the car who actually were warm." And that was the end of it. We soon realized the train was not moving, it was daylight, and we were snowbound in some little town in Belgium. We had bladders about to bust so we began getting out to relieve ourselves, the snow was drifting all around the boxcar. Suddenly one of the guys began digging in the snow like a dog as he said, "Let's dig it out". Well his playful gesture was a great idea as well as a warm-up exercise. All of us had a fox hole shovel, so we got our shovels out and started digging and it didn't take long for all of us to dig out that little train." "During the course of our digging the train out some guys about twenty feet from where I was digging uncovered the frozen body of a man who was probably a railroad worker. He did not appear to be injured; he was just frozen in a twisted and grotesque position and his eyes were open and white; this was the first dead person I had ever seen and of course I will never forget that moment." See the attached document: Carl Otto's book excerpts. When he returned home, Otto finished school, went to college and had a career in education.