

DON JAKEWAY

82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION / 508TH PIR / H COMPANY WWII 1942-1945

Don Jakeway entered the United States Army on November 28, 1942. He took his initial basic training at Camp Toccoa, Georgia with additional extended training in demolitions at Camp Blanding, Florida. The total was thirteen weeks.

Don Jakeway's unit went through jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia. This training included five qualifying jumps....enough to earn the coveted paratrooper wings. More training was done at Camp Mackall, North Carolina prior to transferring to Camp Shanks, New York in preparation for shipment overseas.

The eleven day crossing of the Atlantic began on December 23, 1943. The ship arrived in Belfast, Northern Ireland where the unit would stay until it was shipped to Knottingham, England in March, 1944. Once in Knottingham final training preparations for the D-Day jump began.

Don Jakeway jumped into Normandy on June 6, 1944 landing near Chef-du-Pont outside of St. Mere Eglise. On July 4th "H" Company lost several men in an attack across an open field in the Carentan Peninsula. The 508th PIR fought in the Normandy campaign until July 13th it was pulled back to England.

While in England more training ensued until September 17, 1944 when the 82nd Airborne Division jumped into Holland in the leading elements of "Operation Market Garden". Five days into the Holland operation Don Jakeway was severely wounded (near the town of Beek) by artillery shrapnel. He received wounds in the face, head and back requiring his evacuation. He was hospitalized for an extended period, recovering barely in time to be returned to duty as the "Battle of the Bulge" began in mid December, 1944.

The 82nd Airborne was sent to the town of Werbomont where it was to shield against a German attack. On January 31, 1945 during the closing days of the Ardennes Offensive Don Jakeway was shot through the lung by a German sniper. He was carried to an aid station, by two German prisoners and loaded into an ambulance for the trip to the division hospital at Leige. During the trip the driver lost control and the ambulance rolled over and over down the side of a mountain landing upside down in a river. Everyone was killed except Don Jakeway. He was rescued when American soldiers spotted the wreckage in the river. Don recovered and was released on August 25, 1945 from Memphis General Hospital.

This ended Don Jakeway's active participation in the war.

After the war Don Jakeway married, had four children and had a career in international sales. Don has always taken an active interest in local community affairs around Johnstown, Ohio.