

Stark Ginn
7th Armed Infantry, Army
European Theater, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe
Bronze Star, combat infantry medal
European, African, Middle Eastern Service Award

Called up for duty February 7, 1942. had been walking on the beach in Jacksonville, Florida, only married 6 months. Heard the news about Pearl Harbor. Was in the reserves a year and a half prior, so expected to get the call. Reported to active duty in January. Went to Camp Blanding and Fort Riley in Kansas. Placed in a refresher course. Was in cavalry training. Had horses and did riding, even though it was winter and there was snow on the ground. Had limited armored divisions. During that time, tanks were being made that would be used in the war. Cavalry division would be converted into armored division later on.

After six weeks course, assigned to 14th Cavalry Regiment in Tuscon, Arizona. Did patrolling of Davis Airfield where bombers were being transported. Guarded airport, did border patrol along the Mexican border. Was there for four months. Received orders to ship horses off to pasture, return to Ft. Riley where headquarters were. Changed from cavalry division to the 9th armored division. We didn't see the horses anymore after that.

Transferred to 8th armored to Fort Knox, Kentucky. Took two months of training in armored battle. Taught to drive and operate every vehicle that the armored forces had, and to fire all the weapons they had.

Assigned to 14th regiment of 8th armored division, assistant supply officer. Remained in that job for about a year. 8th armored was a cadre training division where we trained replacements for armored divisions overseas. After 8 months, early 1943, 8th armored was moved to Camp Polk, Louisiana. We were there for a year and a half until the fall of 1944. division was reorganized, regiments were disbanded, largest unit was a battalion. I was assigned to the 7th armored infantry battalion as a supply officer.

Duties: procure and distribute all supplies, food, clothing ammunition that the unit required. For a staff of about 6 people. We didn't have any real indications as to when we might be pulling out, since we were equipped to train overseas replacements.

September 1944, notified we should be prepared to move out to European Theater in the Fall. Materials used in combat. Saw that equipment was loaded and shipped out to New York port, got equipment loaded. Left for convoy in November.

Wasn't actively engaged in a tank unit after being named a supply officer. When we got to combat, we were assigned tank companies, artillery battery, reconnaissance unit. I had to make certain we had the right materials for tank and artillery company. Infantry units needed bazooka ammunition, very effective in stopping German tanks, even tiger tanks. Infantrymen would conceal themselves in buildings and woods, fire on tanks and other vehicles. Moved at night very often. Would have a lull in fighting in the afternoon.

Developed a method of keeping at least truck loaded with ammunition, one with gasoline for combat units as they were moving.

First assignment was to push Germans out of Ardennes Forest. Got them out of the forest. They dropped back pretty quickly. Moved from one small town to another, depending on resistance Germans put up in small towns. Many of the towns had heavily fortified walls. Units would use bazookas to smash through walls, explosions made it easier for infantrymen to get in building.

Responsible for having supplies during all the moves. Stayed with supply trucks, 2 ½ ton trucks, had at least 10. sometimes were quite a distance from the unit. Convoys running back and forth. 2-3 trucks per combat unit. I think that's why my commanding officer, a West Pointer, knew he could depend on me to have the supplies. That's why he recommended me for a bronze star, because I stayed with them. At this time, I was 24.

3 armored infantry battalions, 3 artillery battalions, 3 tank battalions in every division. Engineer and reconnaissance units, plus repair outfits. Moving an armored division was quite a feat. Had to reset up shop every couple of days. Moved steadily through Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe. Crossed the Rhine, had units ready to move on to Berlin but were pulled back because they had already planned that the Russians would take Berlin and the Americans would pull back and give them a chance. I was told that we had messages that Germans were trying to hold Russians back until Americans got there, and I wouldn't doubt that that was true. Russians and Germans had been fighting bitterly for years, and they didn't want Russians to take Berlin. Settled farther back into Central Germany. My division's last combat was in the Hartz Mountains, along about April of 1945. that's where we were when the Germans surrendered. Were in a nice little resort town in the Hartz Mountains. Pulled back and sent into Czechoslovakia. Transferred to Division Supply Office as assistant to division supply officer. In a month, was transferred to army headquarters in Munich, June. Assigned 3rd army fiscal officer. Remained in that job until I had enough "points" to come back in the states in November. Was separated in Camp Gordon, Georgia.

Third army fiscal officer: not what the term would imply. Not financial. Assigned duty of drawing up orders for supply and evacuation work of army units. Fiscal officer before me got a chance to come back to the states, needed a replacement. Wrote supply memoranda, set up means for obtaining fuel supplies. Went to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia at Shaf supreme headquarters to meet with governmental people in Prague to work out a means of reimbursing the Czechs for supplies and space, other aid they had given us during combat. Met with undersecretaries of various department of Czech government, worked out way of reimbursing.

Had to write off equipment, tanks that were damaged beyond use. We had a form we had to fill out periodically, listing the number of tanks and other vehicles that had been abandoned due to damage they'd sustained. I don't know what they did with unused supplies and equipment. Left tanks where they were disabled. Those that were given up

to be prepared were picked up by ordinance people, but the ones that were completely demolished, damaged too much were written off.

After war, returned home to wife. Wife had actually been able to join him in most of his stateside training. Wife stayed with other wives during training, even though he wasn't there much. Was able to have kitchen privileges, shared communal living space. At one place, had a duplex—were "in heaven." She stayed with her parents in Atlanta during the war, baby was born. Great to get home, meet my young son, who was about a year old by the time I got home.

Lessons learned: about working with people, supply companies, drivers. If you're willing to work and will do anything you ask anyone else to do, they'll almost always respond and you'll have a good situation.

Contact with African Americans: had AA officers we rode with, could be one or two in a barracks. I grew up in the South, and while we were segregated, loved a lot of black people who worked for us, came to know and appreciate there. Never had any problems with them. I was very comfortable with them.

This is a marvelous nation we have, it's got it's faults and sometimes we get upset. I've traveled a bit, mostly in Europe, we have the finest people and finest nation. We have to realize although our government and leaders make mistakes, it all averages out to be the best place in the world for freedom and opportunity, and a comfortable life.