

William Davis Rhodes

423/F

106th Infantry Division

A few years ago, I uncovered a small treasure. It was a document that I had longed to find. And when I finally found it, held it in my hands, it was as if a key had turned within a lock.

It was my grandfather's Honorable Discharge.



William D. Rhodes, born on 17 December 1917, was 25 when he joined up. Three years later, he was much older. He had seen the bloody Normandy beach code-named Omaha. He had stared into the mists of a snowy forest named Ardennes, a frozen hell where over a million men fought the largest land battle of the war.

He had mysteriously "acquired" a motorcycle and cruised the frozen lanes of Belgium, meeting up with a Belgian lass known only as Collette. He had seen a Nazi death camp.

And, somewhere along the way, someone had handed him a Silver Star.

He was a member of the 3rd Armored Division, the Spearhead that drove into the heart of Nazi Germany. The unstoppable 3rd was the first allied unit to enter Germany, the first to capture a German town (Roetgen), and the first to breach the infamous Siegfried Line. And, when the bloody end finally came, it was the last unit of the First Army's VII Corps to cease firing.

When it was all over, the division's artillery officer reported that 490,021 rounds of 105mm ammunition had been fired between D-Day and VE Day, more than any other division in

the European theater. This does not count the estimated 100,000 rounds fired by attached light battalions.

Later, my grandfather was part of the **106th Infantry Division**, proudly known as the Golden Lions. I have corresponded with some of the members of **Company F 423rd Infantry** of the Golden Lions.



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