

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month



March 2018



Eugene Jacob Harmack

United States Army

Sponsored by:
St. Louis-Jefferson
Chapter

Eugene entered the United States Army in August, 1943, and was honorably discharged in November, 1945. He went to basic training at Camp Robinson, Arkansas. He then transferred to Fort Benning, Georgia, where he taught communications to officers, teaching them how to run cable wire in the field. His next transfer was to Auburn University where he studied engineering. Before going overseas, he was transferred to Camp McCain, Mississippi.

Overseas he was stationed in Wales, joining the 83rd Infantry. Eugene was then sent to Normandy, France and Omaha Beach, June, 1944. When they arrived in the area a storm came in on the 14th. They sat in the water for four days before they could go on land, which was the 19th. After landing they went seven miles inland to flush out Germans. Here Eugene said, "They were in the war." His unit was assigned to Patton's Army in the Battle of the Bulge, in Ardennes Forest, Belgium. There were only hedgerows between the Germans and the Americans. It was a much tougher fight, all communications were cut off. Eugene said that the Captain said they will have to use their bayonets. Eugene said, "No, why can't we get help?" The Captain said the only communication radio was in the

jeep in the middle of the fire. Eugene said, "I will get the radio and the jeep." And he did. They were able to call for back up and the artillery, the Germans soon left.

General Patton kept going at a very fast pace, Eugene and five other men ended up at an outpost, two miles out. They were laying wire along the road for communications. Soon three of the men were pinned down by very young German soldiers that had tied themselves in the trees. Eugene's unit had a bazooka gun and they shot the Germans out of the trees and shot most of the limbs off the trees. They got their wire laid down. Eugene stated, "We were close to each other, the people he worked with, which made us go on."

Christmas that year, they were in Ocken, Germany. On Christmas Day their unit was sent back to the Battle of the Bulge. They were sent to the end of the battle in Ardennes, in the Harkin Forest. It was very bad fighting and it was so very cold many men got frost bite in their feet and hands. Eugene received a 70% disability for the frost bite he received. They were not done yet, they went up the Autobahn, and their unit picked up every abandoned tank, truck, motor cycle, and even got a Mercedes Benz for their Colonel to ride in. They covered 250 miles in less than ten days. The official United States Army Newspaper for soldiers "Stars and Stripes" told their story and called them "Rag Tag Circus." This trip took them within 35 miles of Berlin, but Russia occupied Berlin and their journey ended there.

Eugene helped liberate three concentration camps along the way. Also they went into many small towns while in Belgium, Germany, and France.

Eugene is proud to talk about and show his medals. The medal he received when he went to get the radio and jeep was a bronze star w/oak leaf cluster and V for Valor or Combat. He has an infantry badge 7-12-1944 near Sainteny, France. He has four other bronze stars for Normandy, France, Northern France, Ardennes, France, and Central Europe. He has medals for different battles that he was in, Occupy Germany, European African, Middle East Campaign, also for rifle, pistol, and machine gun, combat badge, and Good Conduct Medal. He said the metals he received were during President Roosevelt's time as President.

He received shrapnel wounds while at the Battle of Ardennes, France. Eugene could have applied for the Purple Heart, but he said, "That was for people who lost their lives."

Eugene married Arlene in 1943. They have two daughters, six grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. He worked for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, retiring in 1981. He was a conductor, traveling mostly from St. Louis to Jefferson City, Missouri. He is a member of his local chapter of the Battle of the Bulge.

Eugene frequently shared his story with local schools. He has been on a Veteran Honor Flight to see the World War II monument in Washington DC.

St. Louis-Jefferson Daughters are very honored and proud to recognize Eugene Jacob Harmack as Patriot of the Month for his most dedicated patriotic service while fighting for and defending out great nation.