



William Charles “Bud” Schwartz

On July 2, 1943, three days after high school graduation, Bud Schwartz found himself drafted into the U.S. Army joining the war efforts of WWII. The kid from Detroit spent the next 17 weeks at Fort Riley, Kansas; boot camp and then Calvary horse riding training. His official Military Occupation Specialty was Construction Foreman #059. However, he recalled most duties involved infantry and reconnaissance.

After being assigned to the 36th Combat Engineers / Company B 2826th Engineer Battalion, Schwartz was sent to fight in the European front. The 36th had already completed four major invasions of the war. Schwartz joined the group as a “replacement” prior to the fifth and final amphibious assault with the invasion of southern France in 1944, code named Operation Dragoon. By the time Bud Schwartz joined the 36th, it had been completely replenished three times with replacements, he recalled. Their invasion time on Southern France was “H Hour” -6 (minutes), landing on August 15, 1944 in an “LCI boat” – Landing Craft Infantry. The *Dragoon* force met up with southern thrusts from Operation Overlord (Normandy Invasion) in mid-September, near Dijon, France.

The 36th Combat Engineers supported Allied units through three additional campaigns until the end of the war; the Rhineland Campaign, the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign, and the Central European Campaign. They were fed sea rations that had been packaged during WWI and dated in 1918. At times, the combat engineers relieved infantry units for two to three week rotations as they pushed the Germans back. Bud remembers being in a fox hole for 37 straight days during this campaign. When Christmas came in 1944, Schwartz and the 36th stopped for a midnight mass service; even though he was not

Catholic he found some peace in joining the rest inside this packed church in a small French village.

There was one close call that Schwartz will never forget. He had been assigned to the end of a line of troops and was just moved up the line when the soldier that took his place was hit with a mortar shell that fell from the sky. Though still alive, the soldier was wounded badly from shrapnel. Schwartz and his comrades took cover inside a house where they fashioned a stretcher out of an old bed spring to help the injured man. After loading the wounded soldier onto this bed spring, they carried him for four hours during the night back to their headquarters where he was turned over to the medics.

After crossing the Rhine River, they moved into Heidelberg, Germany. Though they were a few miles from the Austrian border and the war had not yet ended, German troops were surrendering in companies. The men of the 36th held the Germans on the side of the road until the "MP's" – Military Police came to haul them off by the truck full. World War II had finally ended and the troops were sent home in stages. However, Schwartz had not earned enough points during his tour to return to the United States until the end of 1945. In the meantime, he was assigned to an Army baseball team that traveled Europe entertaining crowds. Schwartz left Europe on board a cruise ship that had been commandeered for war transport and rode home with 12 troops to a stateroom. They landed in New York harbor and were greeted only by a Red Cross worker. After being handed a doughnut and a half a pint of milk they were hustled down a pier to waiting Army trucks.

In 1953, William "Bud" Schwartz began his new life in Eden Prairie, Minnesota with his wife Dorothy. They raised three children on a modest life as an electrician. Bud later joined the VFW Post in Hopkins, Minnesota, becoming a life member. He was also a member of a committee that created and built a Veterans Memorial in Eden Prairie; where he raised the American flag for a huge crowd during the historic "First Flag Raising" on Veterans Day in 2007. In 2008, Bud Schwartz was humbled to have participated in an "Honor Flight" where veterans from Minnesota were flown on a chartered plane with all WWII Veterans to Washington, DC under police & fire escort to tour the World War II Memorial.

William Schwartz was awarded

- Good Conduct Medal
- World War II Victory Medal
- Army of Occupation Medal
- European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/ 4 bronze battle stars and 1 bronze arrowhead (invasion)
- WWII Lapel Button