Bronze Star Awarded Sgt. David Grimes

Master Sergeant David I. Grimes, Rt. 2, Lovilia, has recently been awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service with the 16th Tank Destroyer Group in France and Germany.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry E. Grimes, and has been in the Army since August 25, 1941. He came overseas with the 522nd Replacement Company in September, 1944, and saw service both in England and on the Continent.

Sgt., Grimes was a student of commercial-subjects in Iowa Success School, Ottumwa at the time he entered military service, and plans to continue his education upon discharge. A member of Headquarters, 26th Signal Training Battalion, Camp Crowder Mo., for 28 months, he held the rank of First Sergeant from December 28, 1942, until April 1 of this year, when he was appointed Master Sergeant.

Sgt. Grimes was awarded the medal in connection with military operations from March 12 to May 10. The citation read: "Serving in an outstanding meritorious manner, acting at times as First Sergeant as well as Sergeant Major, he displayed exceptional ability in the handling of men as well as records. Working the clock around on many occasions, beyond the call of duty, Master Sergeant Grimes has the respect and admiration of all men in his organization."

Source: Albia Union Republican, June 28, 1945

Grimes service spanned entire WWII time period

Seventy-one years ago David Grimes, now 94, had graduated from Albia High School and was in college at Ottumwa Business School when he was drafted by the U.S. Army, just prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

The eldest son of Harry and Mable Grimes, who farmed west of Albia, Grimes finished his training at Camp Crowder near Joplin, Mo. and headed to the European Theater of Operations.

From the time the war started Dec. 7, 1941 until it ended in May of 1945, Grimes was in uniform, one of the longest serving veterans in Monroe County. He earned the rank of Master Sgt., serving with Patton's 7th Army as part of the 16th Tank Destroyers unit. He was cited for Meritorious Achievement against the German enemy from March 12, 1945 to May, 1945, and was awarded the Bronze Star for valor.

His service took him to England, southern France and into Germany where his unit helped liberate the notorious Nazi concentration camp at Dachau.

After the war, Grimes returned home and worked at Peoples National Bank before being elected Monroe County Auditor in 1952, an office he held until his retirement in 1985. Ten years after he entered the Army, he married his wife, Gladys. He has one son, Richard, of Albia, a step-daughter, Carolyn and three grandchildren, Matt, Phil and Ted Sullivan. He has been a long-time member of the Albia American Legion and VFW Post.

Conway wounded twice before returning home

John R. Conway left for his tour in the U.S. Army with the 90th Division on April Fool’s Day, 1942 – but it was no joke.
He shipped out to Fort Dix, N.J. and was in England for three months training for the invasion of France. He loaded on a troop transport on June 3 headed for the beaches of Normandy, landing on Utah Beach.

“We had no idea where we were going, but we finally figured out what was going to happen,” he told his family. “Being a Catholic, we knew something was going to happen when the priest gave us general absolution.”

Conway’s group was supposed to connect up with paratroopers attacking inland toward the beach, but the glider pilot couldn’t get the paratroopers to the landing site, so the 90th had to go it alone. Conway made it off the beach but on June 11 was hit in the knee and hip with shrapnel. He was taken to a field hospital, then back to England.

He got back to his unit in August, but in the latter part of August suffered serious leg wounds. This time the injury was serious enough that he was shipped stateside to Barnes General Hospital in Walla Walla, Wash..

He was supposed to have arrived home for Christmas (1944) but couldn’t walk without crutches, missed Christmas in Melrose, but finally returned home early in 1945.

Source: Albia Newspapers, May 16, 2012