



**Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion,  
411<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment**



SSG Edward E. Ward, Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 411<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 103d Infantry Division (Cactus) was born October 17, 1925 in Tahoka, Texas. In March, 1944, while attending Cooper School in Woodrow, Texas, Ed received a letter in the mail from his friendly Draft Board.

Ed was ordered to report to the Induction Station at Lubbock, Texas where he underwent his physical exam. When Ed went to take his physical exam, he explained he was still in school and was told to get the Superintendent of Schools to write a letter and he could be dismissed. The Superintendent replied that he couldn't do that, so off Ed went to basic training. He left out of Lubbock, Texas for Fort Sill, Oklahoma. There, PVT Ward spent about four days getting shots, uniforms, and indoctrinated into service life. From Fort Sill he was shipped to Fort Hood, Texas where he underwent six weeks of Basic Training. Upon completion of Basic, PVT Ward was given a 15 day furlough and orders to report to Camp Howze, Texas. On August 28, 1944, PVT Ward was assigned to Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 411<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 103d Infantry Division (Cactus). He was promoted to PFC on October 17, 1944.

PFC Ward's first combat experience came on November 11, 1944 when his unit was sent out on patrol. They encountered a German sniper which caused them to seek cover behind the trees. As he dove behind a tree, PFC Ward felt the bark of the tree hitting him as the sniper's bullet came dangerously close.

In action at the Siegfried Line, Privates First Class Ed Ward and Theodore Szymanski, Mapleshade, New Jersey, were ordered to stand watch. PFC Ward pulled his shift and was relieved by PFC Szymanski. PFC Ward, dog tired from constant combat, lay down under his raincoat and went to sleep, only to be rudely awakened by a German

soldier demanding he surrender. Ward and Szymanski were taken to a nearby pillbox for interrogation. There they spent the night. PFC Ward recalls that he was shaking so badly that the Germans thought he was cold and gave him a blanket. It wasn't the cold, but fear and nerves that was causing him to shake. While in the pillbox, Szymanski, fluent in Polish, struck up a conversation with a Polish speaking German. He convinced the German soldier that the hills surrounding the pillboxes were full of Americans and hundreds of big tanks.

About this time, the tanks begin to fire on the pillbox as did 105mm howitzers. The explosions were deafening outside the pillbox door. This frightened the Germans to the extent that they agree to surrender to Ward and Szymanski, however they were ever more fearful that surrounding pillboxes would open upon them when they stepped out of their own pillbox. Szymanski persuaded them that the other pillboxes would be "buttoned up" by the intense tank and artillery fire. As the American attackers neared the German concrete fortification, Ward and Szymanski jerked open the door and Ward stuck out a "white" flag indicating they were surrendering. Immediately the two American servicemen came out of the pillbox with Szymanski in front, followed by 14 Germans, and Ward trailing behind.

PFC Ward was promoted to Staff Sergeant on March 25, 1945 and after V-E day, on June 16, 1945 transferred to the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Today, Edward E. Ward lives in Lubbock, Texas.